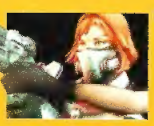
the Getaway 2
FIRST amazing LOOK!

HITMAN CONTRACTS
EXCLUSIVE Screens!



TIMESPLITTERS 3
FIRST stunning NEWS!

100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

WORLD'S BEST-SELLING PS2 MAG!

PSM

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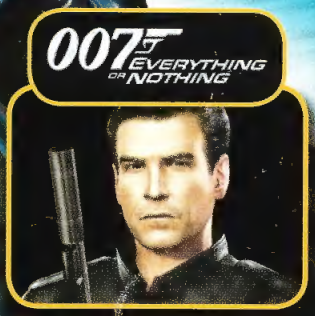
OUR ALL-TIME TOP 10 GAME SERIES!

CAN YOU GUESS OUR #1?



BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING—RATED!

SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

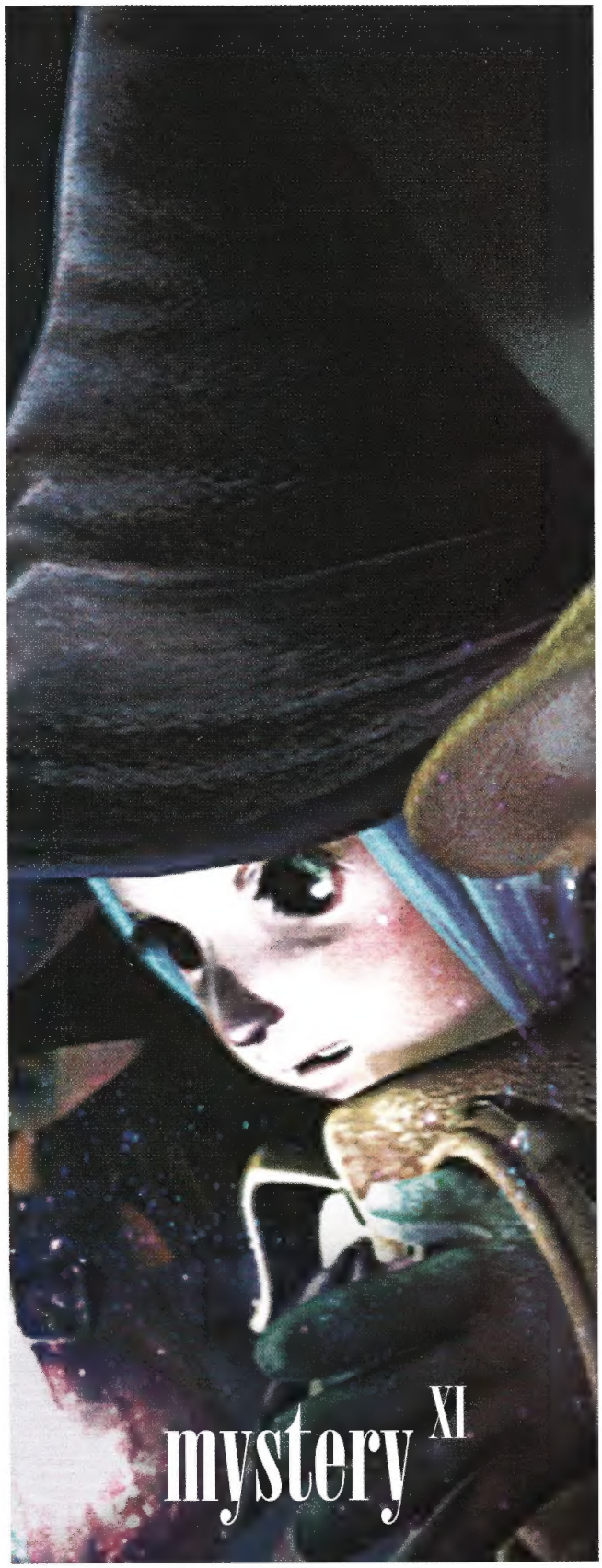
WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

10-PAGE FIRST LOOK!
THE WILDEST MK EVER!

› DEATH TRAPS › ADVENTURE MODE › MULTI-LEVEL ARENAS › NOOB, ERMAC & MORE!

ISSUE 83 ▸ APRIL 2004 ▸ VOL.8



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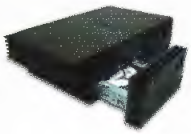

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Violence

Game Experience May Change During Online Play

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<< AFTER BEING A PART OF **PSM** FOR SEVEN YEARS, **LEAVING** DOESN'T COME EASY >>

EDITOR'S LETTER

PSM Says "Bon voyage" to a longtime friend

Chris Slate, here. I'm sorry to say that Senior Editor Stephen Frost, an original PSMer, leaves us this issue. Steve wanted to say goodbye, so the floor is his:

After being a part of PSM for seven years, my departure doesn't come easily. Where else can you hang with a group of talented guys who love games as much as you do, and get paid for it? Well, I've been lucky enough to find one other place where I can do that; I've joined a small, but upcoming, company called Electronic Arts. There, I hope to create some truly memorable titles. It will be an interesting change, but I'm up for the challenge. Still, I'm proud of what PSM has accomplished and I'm excited to see where it goes next. I also enjoyed meeting as many of you as I could. Thanks for all your letters and for sticking by us. Happy gaming! —**STEPHEN FROST**

Stephen Frost and co. during his PSM years, before he won the first Nobel Prize ever awarded for a videogame.

CHRIS SLATE Editor-In-Chief

LIKES: Action/adventure games, platformers, arcade racers

HOBBIES: Comics, hoops, DVDs, movies, anime, drawing, iPod

Your favorite Steve story?
Oh man, it would have to be the time that cop came up to us all tough, and then Steve was all like... *Uh, I mean, when he brought us donuts.*

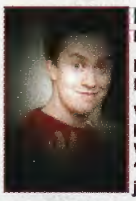
MEET the TEAM

Ever wonder what a crack team of videogame journalists looks like? ...Aw, c'mon folks, just work with us a little, here...

STEPHEN FROST
SENIOR EDITOR

LIKES: Long goodbyes
HOBBIES: Saying "See ya!"

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
You guys are telling Steve Frost stories? Geez... that's it! I'm calling my lawyer!!!



RANDY NELSON
REVIEWS EDITOR

LIKES: Platformers, racers
HOBBIES: Comics & Anime

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
When he claimed spotting a "moaning giant," but it was just Chris in the bathroom.

ERIC BRATCHER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LIKES: RPGs, Weird Imports
HOBBIES: Real estate, Baby!

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
That time he left and then sent me tons of presents. (You reading this, Steve?)

BILL DONOHUE
MANAGING EDITOR

LIKES: polish-pope.com
HOBBIES: Selling CDs!

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
I guess it would be the time that... no, wait... that was somebody else...

DAN FITZPATRICK
ART DIRECTOR

LIKES: Buying houses
HOBBIES: Moving!

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
When Steve almost bought a house. It was a totally vicarious thrill for me!

GARY LIEW
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

LIKES: Cold, hard cash
HOBBIES: Numismatics

What's your favorite Steve Frost story?
That time Steve actually talked to me. He only borrowed five bucks!

ON THE COVER

MORTAL KOMBAAAAAT!! Okay, so we scream that every time there's a new *MK*, but what can we say — we live for simple pleasures. This game rocks. It RAWKS. So check it out on page 54, but be warned — it's totally... Dammit, Sub-Zero, move your head!

BORROW YOUR BUDDY'S GAME IN A MONTH OR GET YOUR GAME TODAY? TOUGH CALL.

START

GAME OVER

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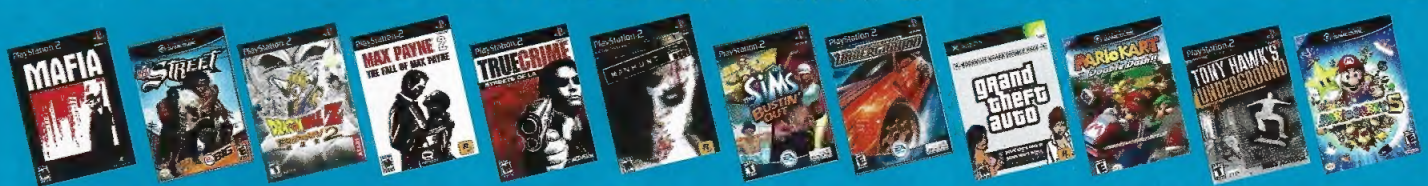

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100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE ▸ ISSUE 83 APRIL 2004 ▸ VOL. 8

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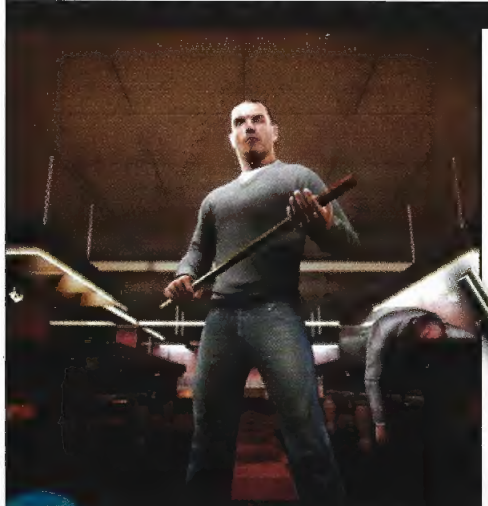
MORTAL KOMBAT DECEPTION

They're back... and more deadly than ever! Ed Boon unleashes the next chapter in the most blood-thirsty series ever created!

<< DECEPTION IS EVERYTHING YOU LOVED ABOUT *DEADLY ALLIANCE* TAKEN EVEN CLOSER TO THE EDGE, AND THEN PUSHED OVER >>



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THE GETAWAY 2

Get even deeper into the dark, gritty London underground!

HITMAN CONTRACTS

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Agent 47 is back for his most violent mission ever... and we've got exclusive pics!

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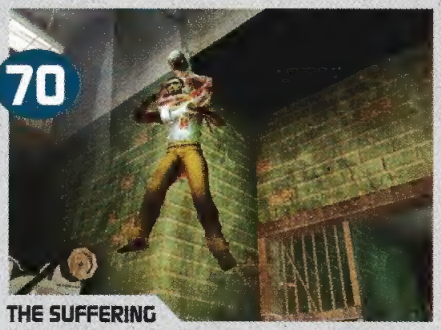

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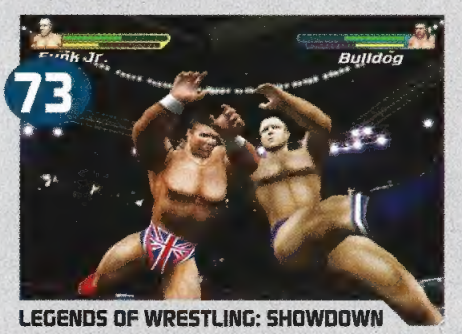

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SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67
He loved the smell of napalm in the morning... that, and melting smores...

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THE ALL-TIME BEST PLAYSTATION SERIES

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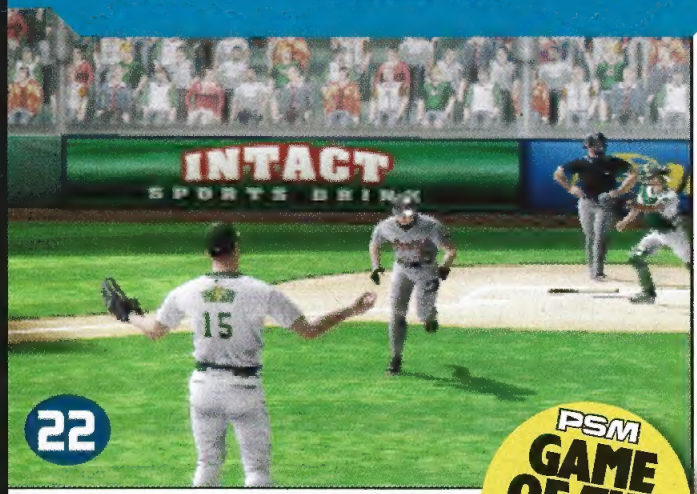
<< THE **BATTLES** ARE ALWAYS **INTENSE** AND FREQUENTLY **GRAPHIC** >> pg. 8



PSM GAME OF THE MONTH

MVP BASEBALL 2004

What was once a button-masher has evolved into a deep, involving, hardcore baseball game. It's our Game of the Month!

FEATURED REVIEWS

▲ CY GIRLS "She had two .45's... She also had a gun... "

▲ LIFELINE "Please keep your arms inside the car at all times."

▲ NIGHTSHADE Her next "costume malfunction" was just butt-ugly.

▲ MAFIA "Yes, this is a .45. Why are you staring at my chest?"

THE PSM MISSION STATEMENT

PSM is the magazine for the gaming elite — the hardcore gamers that support and drive this industry. This is *not* a "mass-market" magazine. We don't focus on "fun for the whole family," or waste space interviewing movie stars that have nothing to do with games. That's just not what we're into.

PSM is also proudly independent. We have no official corporate sponsor, so you can trust that our reviews and opinions will always be 100% our own. Our readers always come first, and we would never, *ever* betray your trust. This is our promise to you, the hardcore PlayStation 2 gamer, who deserves nothing less. Now let's get this issue going!

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PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

PlayStation.2

XBOX

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GET AGRIPPA

Men in skirts storm PS2!

Capcom's bloody *Shadow of Rome* leads the way

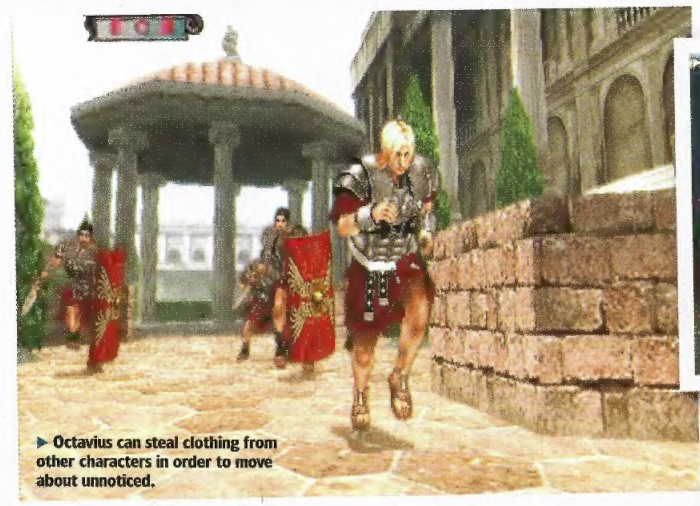
Way back in the day, movies set in ancient Rome were all the rage. The best ones featured epic — and often gruesome — fights to the death between warrior slaves known as gladiators. Flash forward to present day, and we have movies like *Gladiator* winning Oscars and not one, but two gladiator-themed PS2 game releases within the past 12 months... and there are more on the way.

Specifically, we're talking about the next game from *Mega Man* and *Onimusha* creator, Keiji Inafune. It's called *Shadow of Rome*, and it depicts gladiatorial combat in all its extremely bloody glory. Set for release this fall, the game uses the *Onimusha 3* graphics engine — which means, in short, it's all real time and looks absolutely gorgeous.

The story centers on Agrippa, son of Julius Caesar's closest advisor. Caesar is killed, Agrippa's father is blamed, and will be executed by the winner of the upcoming gladiator tournament. Agrippa enters the tournament with two goals: to win and spare his father's life.

Agrippa starts out in small brawls, and moves all the way up to giant coliseums complete with battlements and catapults. The battles are always intense and frequently graphic — blood and body parts fly, and the latter can even be used as weapons. It's interesting to note that Capcom is creating *Shadow of Rome* specifically for the U.S. and Europe; it may never come out in Japan, due to its graphic nature.

While Agrippa fights, his friend Octavius embarks on stealth missions throughout Rome. In these segments, players will get to sneak *Metal Gear*-style, disguise themselves, and more. Throw in chariot racing and you have a game that, in concept, sounds a lot like those great gladiator movies of old — only with a lot more blood. It's not alone, though; PSM is hearing whispers of more games set in ancient Rome on the way for 2004, which could truly make this the "year of the gladiator."



▸ Octavius can steal clothing from other characters in order to move about unnoticed.

▲ Agrippa starts out fighting in small quarters, but later moves up to the big league arenas.

▲ Agrippa is a famed warrior who turns gladiator in order to save his father's life.

▲ Just think of Octavius as the ancient Roman equivalent of Solid Snake.

▲ Yup, that's what you think it is — the giant brute of a gladitor just got his arm chopped off.

◀ Chariot racing will play a big role in the game, and it'll be brutal.

▶ Octavius helps his friend Agrippa by tackling stealth-based missions within Rome itself.

UNCOMMONTARY

THE BLOODIER, THE BETTER?

By Randy Nelson

Shadow of Rome is a prime example of two emerging trends that are worth keeping an eye on as a PlayStation fan. The first of these is Japanese developers jumping on the violence wagon (while trying not to slip off for all the blood, of course). Capcom's upcoming game is really, really gory. But it's not alone. Koji "IGA" Igarashi, director of Konami's next big action game, *NanoBreaker*, was specifically asked to make his game more violent. What's this all leading to? To this gamer, it looks like this: Japanese publishers are taking notice of how well Western-developed, mature-rated titles are selling in the U.S. and want to stake claim to that audience. It should be interesting to see how far they're willing to take it — both of the games I've mentioned are already pushing the gore factor to new heights.

The other trend, albeit in its infancy, is Japanese developers creating games specifically for the U.S. and other foreign markets. *Shadow of Rome* is the most prominent example, but even other big games, such as *Metal Gear Solid 2* — while it did come out in Japan — was aimed at Western gamers from the get-go. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if a lot more U.S.-only, or U.S.-first releases were announced by a number of Japan's biggest game makers in the coming year.

CAN'T WAIT TO GLADIATE?

***Shadow of Rome* won't be out until later this year, so what's a would-be gladiator to do to get pumped up before then? Why not try either of PS2's two recently released gladiator-themed games while you're waiting?**

GLADIUS This action/strategy RPG from LucasArts lets you take part in gladiatorial contests in turn-based, role-playing fashion. It's wonderfully presented, too. We gave it an 8 out of 10.

GLADIATOR: SWORD OF VENGEANCE Strategy RPGs too slow? Try this non-stop hack-fest. It's not as violent as *Shadow of Rome*, but you can still paint the ancient world red. We also gave it an 8 out of 10.

HITS & MISSES

What's hot and what's not in the gaming world today

[+]

ORIGINAL GAMES ON THE RISE

Titles like *Sly Cooper*, *Shenmue*, *Max Payne* and most of Konami's output are examples of what we're talking about. Games with original ideas or interesting new twists, be they hard-as-nails or with good old-fashioned fun, set us apart from the rest of them — and we're glad for it.

MULTIPLAYER GOING MAINSTREAM

EA recently announced that most of their PS2 games are going online, and many more companies are following suit. It is now possible to play a number of games against opponents from around the world. Combine that with the fact that more than half of the games set for 2004 release will have some form of online play, and one of PS2's most impressive features is finally getting the attention it deserves.

[–]

REMOTES AND PROGRESSIVE SCAN

While games that support progressive scan output will run on any PS2, it looks as if only those PS2 owners who bought their systems in late 2003 and onward will get the luxury of progressive scan DVD playback. Not only will Sony's new DVD remote not work on older systems, the driver discs that come with the old remotes (if you can find one) contain the now obsolete, non-progressive scan DVD player software.

DIS-N-GAGED

Following months of slow sales, Nokia has decided to refocus the N-Gage as a technology for its future phones, rather than a stand-alone product. The hefty $299 launch price and mediocre game lineup were major contributors to one of, if not the least, successful gaming platforms in history.

▶ *Astro Boy* was created back when people thought radiation was safe — even for kids.

SEGA'S BLAST FROM THE PAST

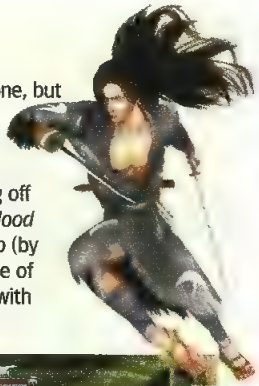
Anime old-timer Astro Boy gets a new lease on life from Sonic Team

Known in Japan as *Tetsuwan Atom ("Mighty Atom"), Astro Boy* is the creation of that country's Walt Disney, Mr. Osamu Tezuka. The super-powered boy robot first appeared decades ago, but has recently resurfaced as a Saturday morning cartoon on the WB, and now in a PS2-exclusive action game from the team responsible for *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

Due for release before summer rolls around, Astro Boy is a fast-paced, colorful action game that's highly reminiscent of Konami's *Zone of The Enders* series. In addition to vibrant-looking action, the game will incorporate some adventure aspects to keep things fresh. And though it's based on a cartoon, Sega is adamant that gamers of all ages will be able to get into — and be challenged by — the title.

NEW BLOOD

Sega rounds out its spring lineup with not one, but two samurai games. *Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku,* based on the hit Cartoon Network series of the same name, is an all-out action fest that sees the titular Jack facing off against the stylized demon warriors of Aku. *Blood Will Tell,* based on the Japanese manga *Dororo* (by *Astro Boy* creator Osamu Tezuka), tells the tale of a samurai named Hyakkimaru who was born with weapons where limbs should be. Yikes!



▲ Developed by Amaze Entertainment, *Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku* captures the look of its TV namesake.

▲ *Blood Will Tell* might look like your average samurai action game, but its play mechanics are quite unique.

FIRST LOOK

EYETOY GETS GROOVY

Dance for the camera! Dance!

Announced not all that long ago in England, the second game made specifically to take advantage of Sony's super-cool

▲ Throw in some oldies, slap Richard Simmons' name on it, and we see videogame gold.

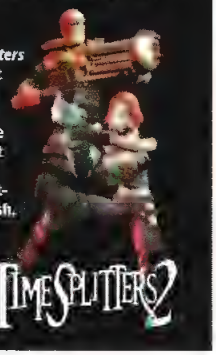
EyeToy camera is officially on its way to the U.S. *EyeToy: Groove,* as it's known, will put your image up on the TV and then make you dance to licensed music from the likes of Madonna, Jamiroquai, and Fatboy Slim using on-screen prompts. Think of it as *Dance Dance Revolution* for the entire body. Sony plans to release the game by the end of spring.

GAME UPDATE

TIMESPLITTERS SPLITS FROM EIDOS

Hit series set for a sequel

It's official: Eidos won't be publishing the next *TimeSplitters* game. Oh yeah, it's also official: There is a next *TimeSplitters* game, from... Electronic Arts. That's right — EA has forged an alliance with *TS* developer Free Radical to create a third game in the popular first-person shooter series on PS2. Details beyond the game's existence are so far unannounced, but PSM has learned since the announcement that the game will be more story-heavy than part two, and definitely feature online multiplayer. Yes!



▶ *TimeSplitters 2* was great — we just would have loved online play. Now it looks like we'll be getting our wish.

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WRATH UNLEASHED™

Be warned - this is not a mere battle of brawn. In this world, war must be waged with a wary hand. Journey from land to land, battle to battle as you deftly command your army of demons, centaurs and dragons. Exploit their strengths. Mind their weaknesses. Slash, claw and slay your way to power - and if you must, unleash your wrath. Cast magic spells. Pit darkness against light. Bend fire, wind and water to your will. And ultimately dominate the world.

TEEN
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Fantasy Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation 2

wrathunleashed.com

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▲ One of our favorite racers finally goes online!

BURNOUT 3 ANNOUNCED!

One of PS2's top racing series gets a new life with help from Electronic Arts

Burnout 2: Point of Impact is near the top of our very short list of all-time favorite racing games, so when it didn't sell so great, and developer Criterion indicated it was moving on from the series, we thought all hope for a sequel was surely lost. Well, decisions change, and, luckily for racing fans, Criterion is most definitely working on *Burnout 3* — in cooperation with Electronic Arts.

Still early in development, *Burnout 3* is already looking great, boasting a more subdued, realistic color palette than the previous two games, but still looking every bit the arcade-style heart-stopper. Online play is planned for both race and crash modes, and will be exclusive to PS2. Look for much more on the game next issue!

COOL STUFF

RAINBOW BRIGHT

Get a custom paint job for that boring old PS2!

Some of us think the stock black PS2 looks just fine, but for those who want to spice up their system, there is an option available beyond the sticker kits available at most game shops. ColorWare (www.colorwarepc.com) offers to professionally paint your system and controllers in any one of 24 high-gloss, automotive quality color finishes. It's not cheap at $99 for the system and $20 for one controller, but it sure looks good. If you'd rather buy a pre-painted PS2, they run $279.

A similar service offered via www.colorconsoles.com is more economically priced, but uses a less expensive (though still great looking) painting process to achieve the results.

Whatever you choose, just remember: if your PS2 is still under warranty and you get it painted, you'd better be extra careful with it — Sony will consider this cosmetic "tampering" enough to render its repair obligations to you null and void.

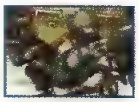
ONLY IN JAPAN

Japanese gamers have been able to buy cool translucent versions of the PS2 in smoke and blue variants for quite some time. We say it's high time Sony brings these see-through beauties to U.S. shores!

▲ ColorWare calls this paint option the "Ferrari," but we call it the "PimpStation."

VERSUS MODE

RAINBOW SIX



VS

THE JACKSON FIVE

R6	J5
ROUND ONE: BACKGROUND	
R6: Ultra-elite, multi-national counter-terrorism squad	J5: Early precursor to boy bands such as N'Sync
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	
R6: Created by top military fiction writer Tom Clancy	J5: Created by their parents, Katherine and Joe Jackson
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	
ROUND TWO: IN ACTION	
R6: Work together as a team to clear rooms of hostiles	J5: Play their records at a party and the room will clear
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	
R6: Use flash-bang grenades that cause ear ringing	J5: Used high-pitched singing voices that caused ear ringing
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	
ROUND THREE: BEST KNOWN FOR	
R6: Teaching terrorists to stop, drop, and, well... drop	J5: Teaching everyone that it's "Easy as A, B, C, 1, 2, 3"
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	
R6: Preventing the release of deadly biological agents	J5: Not preventing Michael Jackson from going solo
Advantage: **Rainbow Six**	

WINNER: RAINBOW SIX

ARE YOU HARDCORE?

PSM wants your displays of fandom

Do you dress up — cosplay — as your favorite PlayStation characters? Do you have a PlayStation-related tattoo? Do you have a wicked game collection or amazing rig to play them on? Have a game idea you want the world to hear about — no matter how crazy it sounds? If the answer is yes, then we want to hear from you.

PSM is looking for readers to express their fandom in upcoming issues, much like we print fan art now. Only we want you to send us photos (digital or scanned — the higher resolution the better) and your game ideas (200 words, tops) to us at psm@futurenetworkusa.com, and be sure to include the words "Fandom" or "Game Idea" in the subject header, or we'll never see it — and that would just plain suck.

▲ Stephanie from Atlanta has the right idea with her awesome *FFX* Lulu cosplay. This is the kind of stuff we want, folks!

VAN HELSING

THE GAME

EVIL HAS ONE NAME TO FEAR

- Spectacular kill moves - Deadly weaponry - Haunting Transylvania locales - Battle Dracula, The Frankenstein's Monster, The Wolf Man and more! -

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Violence

PlayStation 2

XBOX

UNIVERSAL

GAME BOY ADVANCE

VIVENDI UNIVERSAL games

SEE THE MOVIE
VAN HELSING
IN THEATRES MAY 7, 2004

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www.vanhelsinggame.com

IN STORES MAY 7, 2004

Sammy Studios
PlayStation.2
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Violence
Perfect your mastery of the samurai way in heart-pounding melée combat. Become a legend as one of seven warriors making their last stand against a brutal army.
Fight your way through a massive futuristic city, taking on more than 40 unique enemies designed by sci-fi visualist Moebius (Alien, The Fifth Element).

The greatest samurai tale of all time.

DIGITALLY REMASTERED.

Inspired by Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece and created in collaboration with world renowned artists, *Seven Samurai 20XX* takes a timeless action tale far into the future.

Enter a cinematic experience full of inspired moments, dazzling special effects and opening and ending theme music by Academy Award® winner Ryuichi Sakamoto *(The Last Emperor)*.

七人の侍
SEVEN SAMURAI
2 0 X X

www.sevensamurai20XX.com

CHECKPOINT

You've found it: your one-stop spot for all the best stuff headed your way
(Please keep in mind that release dates do change—don't blame us if they do!)

Current Releases

TITLE	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Indy Car Series 05	Racing	Codemasters
Megaman Anniversary Collection	Platform	Capcom
MTV Music Generator 3	Music	Codemasters
Samurai Shodown 5	Fighting	SNK
Shrek 2	Adventure	Activision
The Fast and the Furious	Racing	Vivendi Universal
The Mummy	Adventure	Hip Interactive
Transformers Armada	Adventure	Atari

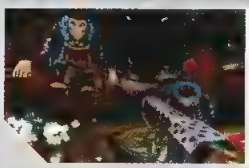
The *Transformers* have an incredibly popular fan base. All together now: "Hail, Megatron!"

May's Releases

TITLE	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Carmen Sandiego: The Stolen Drums	Adventure	Bam! Entertainment
Legends of Wrestling: Showdown	Wrestling	Acclaim
MLB Slugfest 2005	Sports	Midway
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Adventure	Midway
Spider-Man 2	Adventure	Activision
Star Ocean III: Till the End of Time	RPG	Enix
The Warriors	Shooter	Rockstar
X-Men Legends	RPG	Activision

▲ *Spider-Man 2*, the game or *Spider-Man 2*, the movie? Better try both.

PSM Games to Watch



Serious Sam: The Next Mission

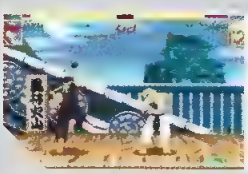
Publisher: Take-Two Type: Action Release Date: Summer

An offshoot of the popular PC-based first-person shooter is headed for a PS2 release later this year. As not evidenced in its title, Sam is after a bunch of nasty aliens in his first Sony console outing. The game will feature vehicles ranging from chariots to hummers and enemies that include knife-brandishing monkeys.

ShellShock: Nam '67

Publisher: Eidos Type: Action Release Date: Summer

Eidos is planning on releasing what will become a highly controversial game. *ShellShock: Nam '67* takes the Vietnam War and shows it for what it truly was: gory, brutal, and with no sense of glory. The game is built on the engine being used for Guerrilla's stunning Sony title *Killzone*, so expect realism to be off the chart for this intense third-person shooter.



Hyper Street Fighter II: Anniversary Edition

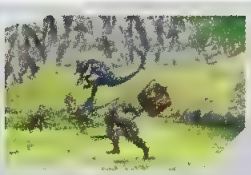
Publisher: Capcom Type: Fighting Release Date: TBA

To say that *Street Fighter II* revolutionized gaming would be an understatement as big as E. Honda. Many sequels surfaced over the next few years, and Capcom has decided to integrate them all on one disc. Moves from *Hyper Fighting* can now be used against characters who prefer the style of *Champion Edition*.

Monster Hunter

Publisher: Capcom Type: Action Release Date: Fall

Yet another Capcom title to keep an eye on, *Monster Hunter* lets up to four players go online to stalk creatures through vast jungles using high-powered weapons while working to perfect their team tactics. Traps can be set to snare the hapless animals, and custom weapons and items can even be sculpted from their bones. Sounds cool!

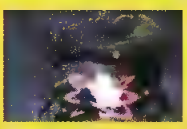


WWX: Rumble Rose

Publisher: Konami Type: Wrestling Release Date: Fall

Konami is working on an all-female professional wrestling game. Um... wow. The development team promises a game that will deliver quality wrestling, humor, and a lot of sex appeal. Each character can be played as either a "babyface" or a "heel," with the choice reflected in both appearance and fighting style.

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PLAYING



1. Final Fantasy XI

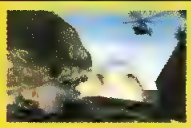
Pub: Sony CEA **Dev:** Square Enix **Type:** Online RPG

Final Fantasy XI **bridges the realm of the MMORPG with the genius of Square Enix and the installed user bases of both the PS2 and the PC.**

2. MX Unleashed

Pub: THQ **Dev:** Rainbow Studios **Type:** Racing

The racing gurus behind *ATV Offroad Fury* really put their all into this incredibly deep motocross game. Even if you don't follow the sport, you'll love it.



3. James Bond: Everything or Nothing

Publisher: EA **Developer:** EA **Type:** Action

This spy thriller's great as a one-player experience, but it gets *really* good when you tackle the cooperative missions with another player over the Internet.

Featuring: BIG GIPP HUGH HEFNER

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Cool Stuff

Here's a look at some of the hottest new gear and goodies you should keep an eye out for

One For All Kameleon 8 Universal Remote

From: Universal Electronics
Price: $99

A truly slick home theatre entertainment system these days has more than a massive television. There's a DVD player, a game console, a stereo for true-to-life sound, and a VCR for taping episodes of The O.C. This can lead to a pile of remote controls, and while the universal controller has been around for a while, there hasn't been one quite like this.

The new Kameleon looks like a Tricorder out of Star Trek and features a motion sensor to activate it and to save power when not in use. To avoid overwhelming users, only the buttons for the currently selected system light up, thanks to a new technology called "digital ink." The Kameleon can be programmed to work with specific brands, or learn commands from other remotes.

▶ **The touch-sensitive, illuminated display changes to reflect the component you're controlling. You can even program it to control PS2 DVD playback.**

Hot In April

OUR TOP DVD PICKS

KILL BILL VOL. 1
RELEASE DATE: APRIL 16
While the movie is short on story, there's no denying it has some of the best swordplay ever caught by a North American camera. Uma Thurman's Bride spends the entire movie cutting a swathe through her former co-workers with her katana.

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
RELEASE DATE: APRIL 6
The final chapter in *The Matrix* trilogy is far from being the strongest, but the two-disc set makes it a must-have for fans of its special effects and epic battle sequences.

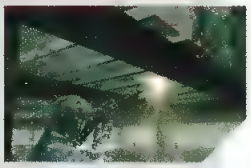
OUR TOP MOVIE PICKS

HELLBOY
OPENS ON: APRIL
The comic strip turned movie about a demon who lives on Earth fighting for the good of mankind shows much promise. Director Guillermo del Toro has experience in the genre having crafted *Blade II*, [illegible] and *Mimic*.

THE PUNISHER
OPENS ON: APRIL 16
Yet another comic hits the multiplex this month. *The Punisher* tells the story of Frank Castle, betrayed and left for dead. The only fitting response, of course, is to enact violent retribution on everyone responsible for his family's death.

Readers' Most Wanted

1 — METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Release Date: TBA
Snake Eater has a grip on the top spot like a boa constrictor.
#1 Last Month



2 — KINGDOM HEARTS II
Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Square Enix
Release Date: TBA
The Disney RPG does a switcheroo this month, moving up a spot.
#3 Last Month

3 — GRAN TURISMO 4
Publisher: Sony CEA
Dev: Polyphony Digital
Release Date: Summer
What is promised to be the ultimate racer is almost at the starting line
#2 Last Month

4 — FINAL FANTASY XII
Pub: Square Enix Dev: Square Enix
Release Date: TBA
Square's next RPG epic holds strong at #4.
#4 Last Month

5 — RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK
Publisher: Capcom Developer: Capcom
Release Date: March
The classic series is ready for online action.
#5 Last Month

6 — DRIVER 3
Publisher: Atari Developer: Reflections
Release Date: Summer
Despite a slip to June, "*DRIV3R*" stays put.
#6 Last Month

New 7 — JAK III
Pub: Sony CEA Dev: Naughty Dog
Release Date: TBA
No word on when, but Jak's coming back.
New This Month!

8 — FINAL FANTASY XI
Pub: Sony CEA Dev: Square Enix
Release Date: March
Square Enix owns the chart this month!
#8 Last Month

New 9 — KILLZONE
Pub: Sony CEA Dev: Guerrilla Games
Release Date: Fall
The hottest-looking console FPS yet.
New This Month!

New 10 — STAR OCEAN III
Pub: Square Enix Dev: Square Enix
Release Date: TBA
Let's hope this makes it out by fall.
New This Month!

CAST YOUR VOTE!
Visit www.psmonline.com and pick your most wanted game from our list of the hottest upcoming releases. We'll tally the results, and print 'em here each issue!

NPD Funworld TRSTS SALES CHARTS

TOP 10 PS2 GAMES FOR DECEMBER

1. Need For Speed Underground

2. Madden NFL 2004
3. Tony Hawk's Underground
4. Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2
5. True Crime: Streets of L.A.
6. Medal of Honor Rising Sun
7. Final Fantasy X-2
8. SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs
9. LOTR: The Return of The King
10. NBA Live 2004

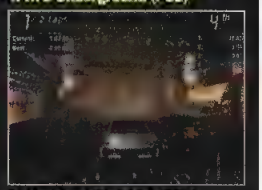
TOP 10 PS1 GAMES FOR DECEMBER

1. Spongebob SuperSponge

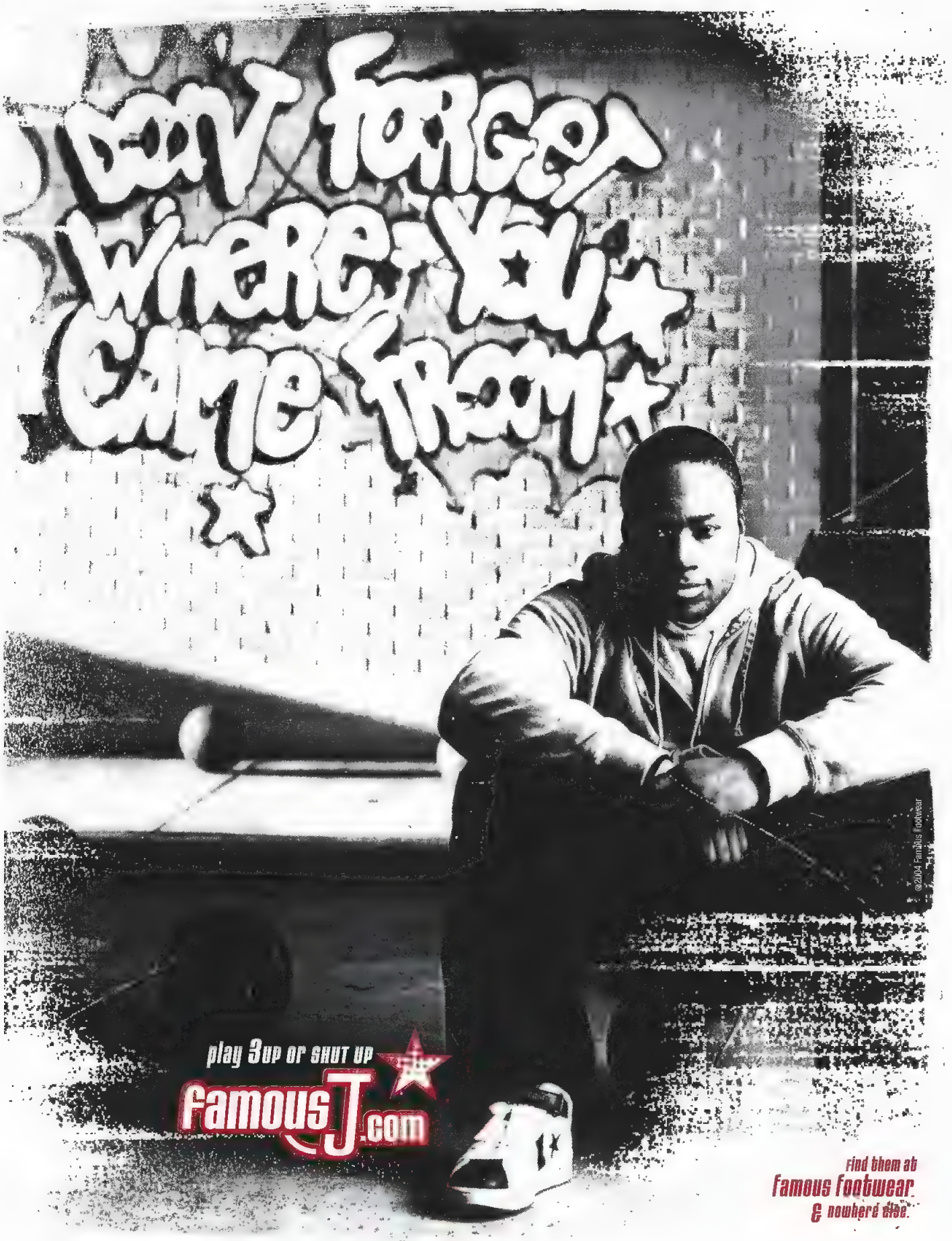
2. Shrek: Treasure Hunt
3. Crash Team Racing
4. Namco Museum Vol. 3
5. Pac-Man World
6. Spyro: Year of The Dragon
7. Gran Turismo 2
8. Beyblade
9. DBZ: Ultimate Battle 22
10. Scooby Doo Cyber Chase

OVERALL TOP 10 FOR DECEMBER

1. NFS Underground (PS2)



2. Madden NFL 2004 (PS2)
3. Mario Kart Double Dash!! (GCN)
4. Tony Hawk's Underground (PS2)
5. DBZ: Budokai 2(PS2)
6. True Crime (PS2)
7. MOH Rising Sun (PS2)
8. Final Fantasy X-2 (PS2)
9. SOCOM II (PS2)
10. LOTR: ROTK (PS2)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EA SPORTS

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

INTRODUCING
TOTAL
PUNCH
CONTROL

With all-new *Total Punch Control*, your right analog controller takes the guesswork out of bringin' the pain.

Precise analog control lets you throw what you want. Where you want. When you want.

Bob and weave to wear 'em down. Or bait opponents with fakes to set 'em up for the sweet sting.

Create openings and close 'em hard with brutal accuracy and timing.

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for Rating Information.

PlayStation.2

ONLINE
BROADBAND AND DIAL-UP

XBOX

and
and
on all platforms. See back of game pack for details.
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EA SPORTS

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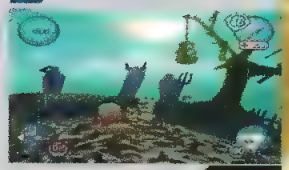


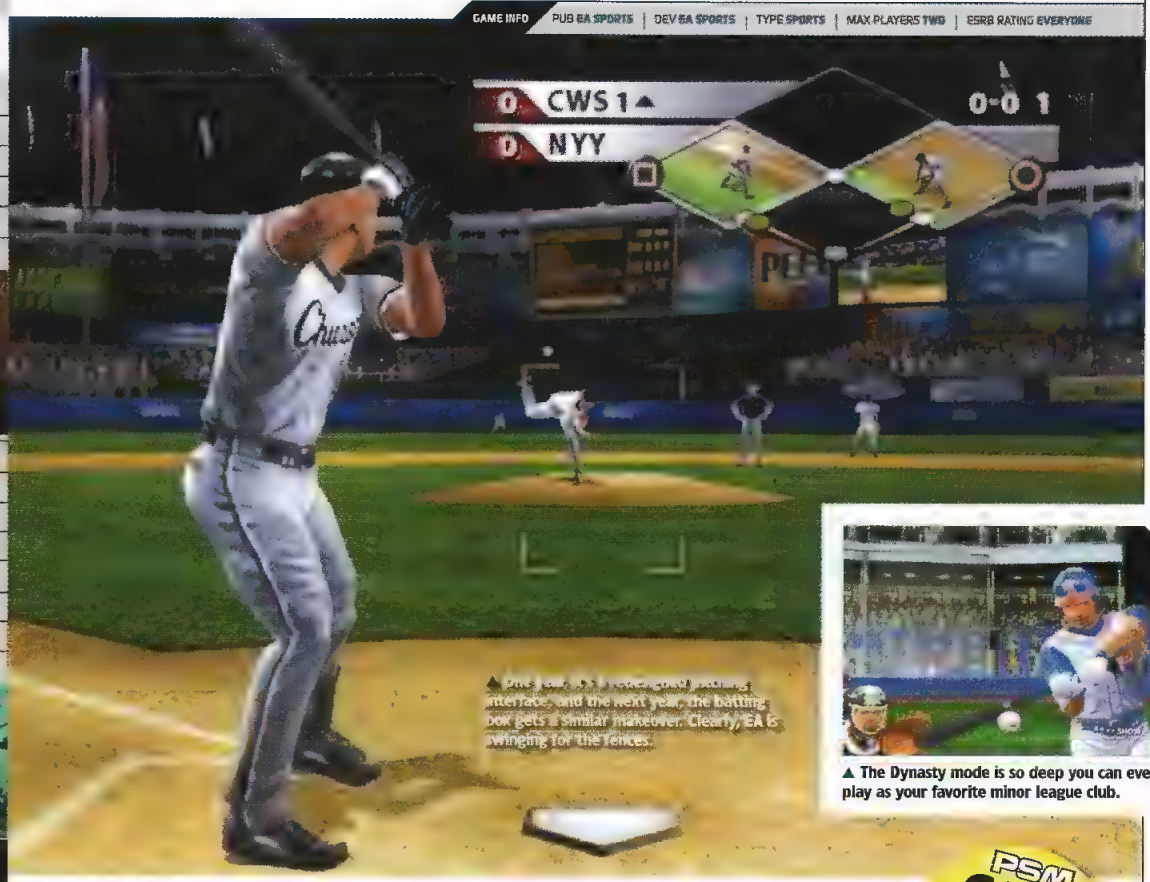
SCORING

10 **CLASSIC** — A rare gem; Our highest recommendation
9 **OUTSTANDING** — One of the better games this year
8 **VERY GOOD** — You can't go wrong
7 **GOOD** — A solid game
6 **OKAY** — Kind of fun, but no big deal
5 **SO-SO** — You've got to love the subject matter
4 **LACKING** — Big flaws really hurt this game
3 **BAD** — Not fun at all
2 **AWFUL** — This game is an insult
1 **WHY?** — Why would anyone do this to us?

We take our reviews very seriously. We spend hours upon hours playtesting each title so that we can give you the absolute best information to help you buy.

Games that score an 8, 9 or 10 earn a Bronze, Silver or Gold **PSM Must-Buy Award.** We don't hand these beauties out easily, so if you see one on a review, a game box or advertising, you'll want to be sure to check that game out.

Finally, when looking up past scores, keep in mind that older games usually wouldn't fare as well if they were reviewed today.



▲ Last year's game received universal praise for its revolutionary batting interface, and the next year's batting interface, and the next year's batting box gets a similar makeover. Clearly, EA is swinging for the fences.

▲ The Dynasty mode is so deep you can even play as your favorite minor league club.

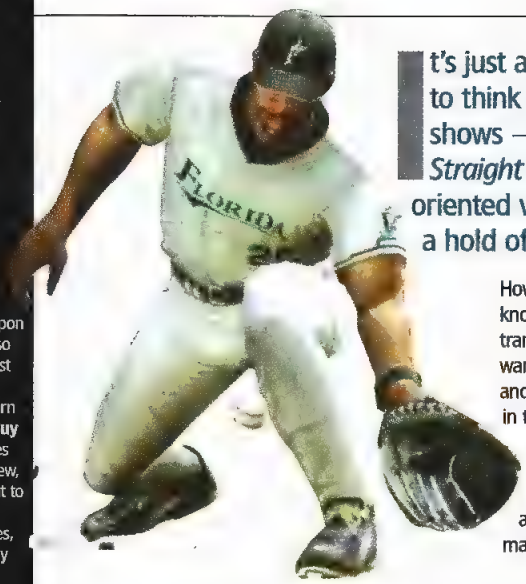
MVP BASEBALL 2004

Yesterday's arcade button masher becomes today's hardcore hero

PSM GAME OF THE MONTH

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

PSM MUST-BUY SILVER



It's just a theory, but we're beginning to think one of those cable makeover shows — not *"Queer Eye for the Straight Guy"*, but some sports-oriented variation on the theme — got a hold of EA's baseball franchise.

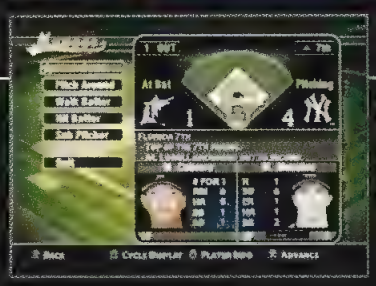
How else would the series formerly known as *Triple Play* radically transform from a dumpy *Slugfest* wannabe into this shockingly deep and addictively playable sports game in two short years? What once was mediocre is now a baseball nerd's dream.

The core of this stunning turnaround is innovative gameplay that makes the game both more realistic and more immersive. Last year's golf-swing pitching meter made every throw a challenge and this year's revamped batting controls are nearly as exciting. Now you can control the direction of each swing with the left analog stick. And while this isn't quite as effective as we'd hoped, it adds the extra dimension of control this franchise needed. Fielding is also improved, with last year's skill-based throwing augmented with an intuitive right analog fielding control. No more frantic guesses at the dive button as the ball zips past. You can also pre-load throws for maximum quickness.

Baseball nerds crave realistic simulation, insanely deep stats and heavy replayability — *MVP 2004* is stacked

<< THE BEST THING ABOUT MVP 2004, HOWEVER, IS THE GAME'S NEARLY LIMITLESS REPLAYABILITY >>

Surprisingly Sim-ple



One of the more surprisingly addictive game additions is Manager Mode, which lets you play an entire game in a few minutes by watching the game from a no-frills stat screens and making only very broad decisions — "Pitch to batter", "Substitute Pitcher", and so on — and letting the game sim the rest. It's remarkably compelling.

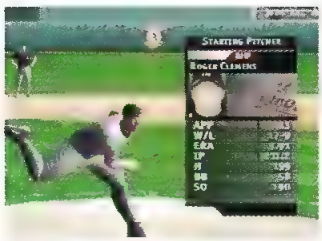
◀ The manager mode strips the game down to its most basic, but it's still pure baseball.

▲ Charge the mound at your own risk... your best players may end up suspended, injured or beat down like a virtual Don Zimmer.

with all three. The Dynasty mode is one of the deepest we've ever seen. You control nearly every management aspect of a Major League Baseball squad. You can even manage your minor league farm teams during the season. Call up the next Mickey Mantle from your AA club or demote your overpriced shortstop to purgatory in Fresno when he asks for more money. Be careful, however: team chemistry is an essential element in how your club plays. Monkey around in a heavy-handed manner, and morale will take a nosedive.

The best thing about *MVP 2004*, however, is the game's nearly limitless replayability. Aside from the massive Dynasty mode, you've got MVP Rewards, the innovative home run showdown from last year and a less exciting, but still enjoyable head-to-head pitching showdown. Better yet, *MVP 2004* is fully playable online. You simply will not run out of stuff to do in this game.

A few issues keep *MVP* from a perfect score. The Dynasty mode, while deep, lacks the smooth presentation that makes EA's *NCAA* Dynasties so addictive. Players need clearer hints and guidance about what they should do next. There's so much to do, it's easy to get lost. Also, the graphics aren't close to the best of the sports world. But, if you can stand these small issues, you'll find a winner in *MVP*. JOHN MARK CUSEY



▲ The Rocket in an Astros' uniform — how weird does that look?

▲ A quick tap on your right analog stick will make your fielder leap in the right direction. It's simple, intuitive and dangerously effective.

◀ *MVP* may win it all this year.

▲ If need be, you can actually choose to slide to one side of the bag and reach over to tap it as you whoosh cleanly past the tag.

PSM FINAL SCORE 9

OUTSTANDING

Extreme depth and innovative controls make *MVP 2004* great. We'll have to wait until next issue to be sure, but this may have just become the best baseball game out there.

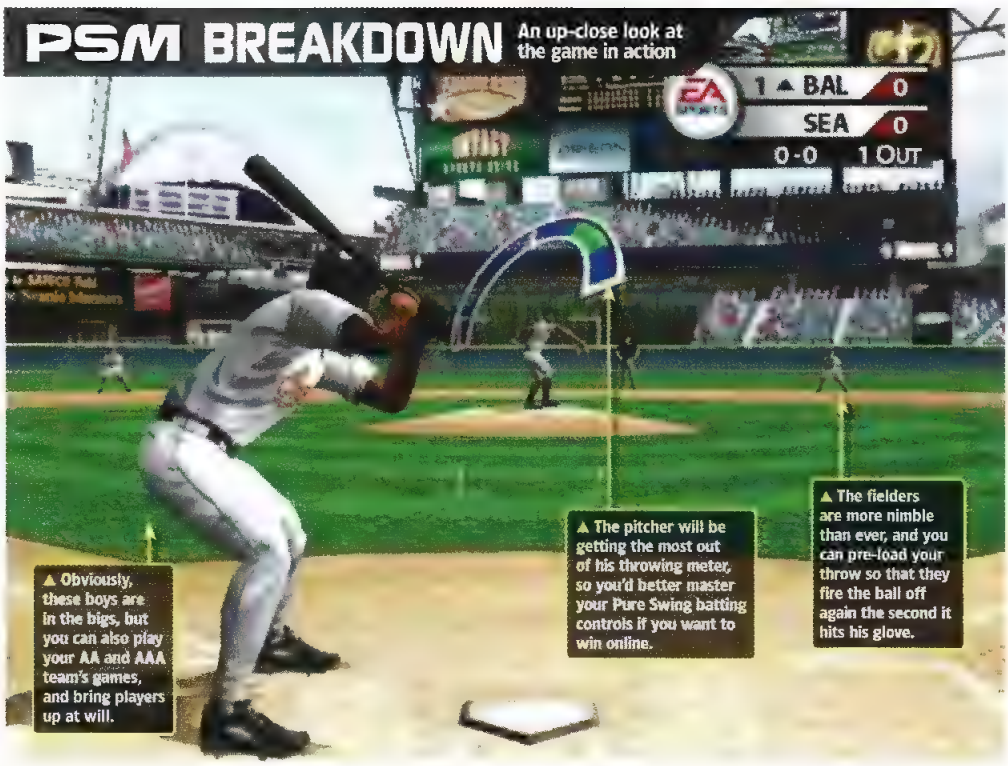
▲ The head's up display enables you to keep an eye on the bases and maybe pick off a sloppy runner.

HOW IT STACKS UP

MVP Baseball 2004	9
World Series Baseball 2K3	8
MVP Baseball 2003	8
MLB Slugfest 2004	8
High Heat 2004	7

PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action



▲ Obviously, these boys are in the bigs, but you can also play your AA and AAA team's games, and bring players up at will.

▲ The pitcher will be getting the most out of his throwing meter, so you'd better master your Pure Swing batting controls if you want to win online.

▲ The fielders are more nimble than ever, and you can pre-load your throw so that they fire the ball off again the second it hits his glove.

GAME INFO | PUB THQ | DEV RAINBOW STUDIOS | TYPE RACING | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB EVERYONE

▼ There have been motocross games before, but how many of them included monster trucks, planes, dune buggies and helicopters as unlockable vehicles? Not many.

PSM MUST-BUY SILVER

MX UNLEASHED

THQ's motocross series takes off — literally

We've played a lot of bike racing games in the past (many of them previous entries in this same series), but thanks to developer Rainbow's obvious love of the subject matter, this may be the best one ever.

MX Unleashed starts off in familiar territory, boasting your standard motocross game setup and basic gameplay. Players start a career and try to race their way to the number one ranking in the world on both indoor supercross and outdoor motocross tracks. There are a ton of courses to try, and while players might blow past the 125cc division, the 250cc class is extremely technical. Merely pressing the gas is a sure way to lose, because turns demand a careful hand on the clutch. Moreover, tracks must be scouted; there's a definite art to knowing which jumps to preload, which ones to simply ride into, and when to give up a tight turn for speed to attack an upcoming ramp. It takes practice, but the first time you get it right, smoothly blowing through a track's every curve and bump without wasting speed and time ... well, that's the stuff that will turn casual fans of the game into diehards.

This may be standard, but it's very well done, and the more you play *MX Unleashed*, the more the game pulls away from the pack. There are countless tracks, a seemingly infinite number of stunts, and some of the coolest innovations the genre has seen. You can race against monster trucks and planes, for example. That's fresh. Also, instead of turning the Free Ride mode into a mere trickfest, players can also engage in target jumping contests or chained accuracy trials, in which players have to nail a whole string of difficult jumps without missing or crashing. THQ has even included random traffic in the Free Ride mode: wandering trucks carry ramps for spontaneous jumping, and careless players can even smash headlong into CPU riders who are just out for a good time.

Naturally, no motocross game would be complete without the bane

▲ Even if you do have a motocross track in your backyard, don't try this at home. No, really, don't.

▲ For some reason, random traffic in the Free Ride levels often comes with ramps attached.

PSM BREAKDOWN
An up-close look at the game in action

of every rider's existence: crashes. Unlike other racers where the slightest collision results in a wipeout, *MX Unleashed* takes great care in deciding whether or not a rider will bail. Players who are clipped while performing a mid-air stunt will be dislodged from their bike and can do nothing but watch the ground race toward them, but less drastic collisions are often recoverable. It's also possible — and rather effective — to land your bike on another racer, who will instantly crash. But remember that they can do the same to you.

Our only minor gripes are that *MX Unleashed* lacks both a true power-slide-style burnout and a *Tony Hawk*-sized cache of game variations. Had THQ incorporated motocross versions of "Horse" and similiar competitions, this would be far and away the best motocross title ever created. But with dozens of riders, bikes, tricks, courses, objectives and bonuses to purchase, this is a minor quibble in an otherwise great game. **DOUG TRUEMAN**

HOW IT STACKS UP

MX Unleashed	**9**
Downhill Domination	**9**
ATV Offroad Fury 2	**8**
Freestyle Metal X	**7**
ATV Quad Power Racing	**7**

PSM FINAL SCORE 9

OUTSTANDING
Even fans who dislike racing games will be impressed with MX Unleashed. The player/bike zen it creates explains why pro riders call cars "cages".

Fly The Friendly Skies

As these screens show, *MX Unleashed* introduces a monster truck, trophy truck, dune buggy, helicopter and biplane as raceable, unlockable vehicles. Taking a jump beside a monster truck — which may land on your head — is terrifying, and racing a biplane gives a new sense of purpose to gunning full throttle over open land.

▲ This *MX* is truly unleashed. We wouldn't be the least bit shocked to meet a beagle flying a doghouse.

▲ The CPU bikers race hard and take jumps well, but turn wide on corners.

▲ Man, 7th place and the race hasn't even begun yet. We've got work to do.

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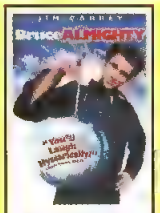
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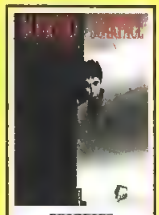
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RATING PENDING
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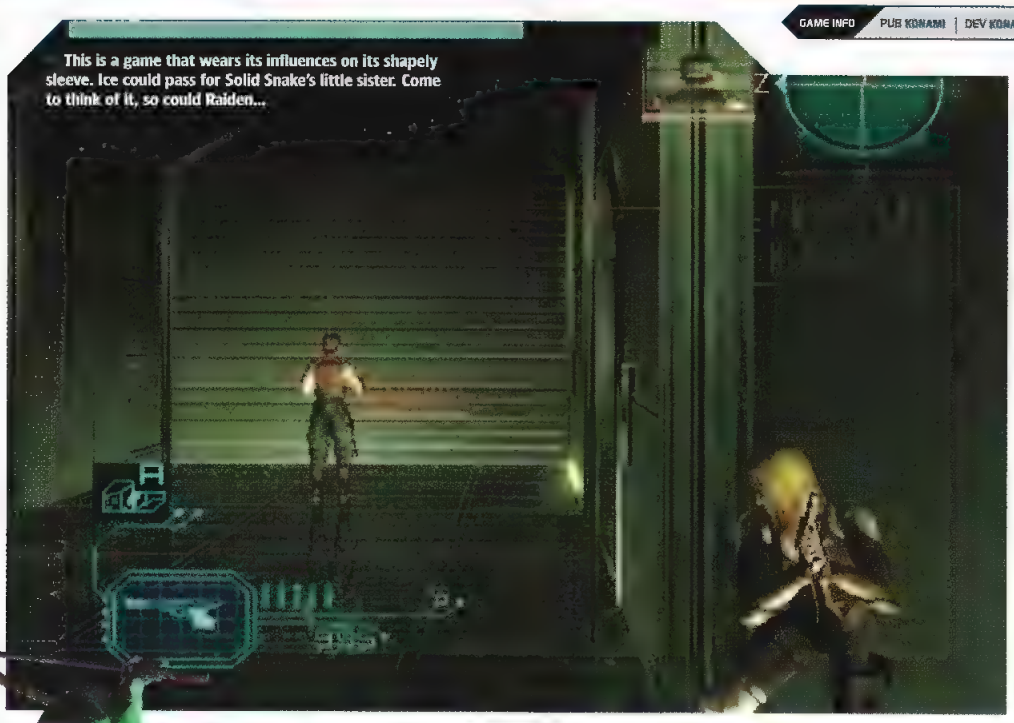
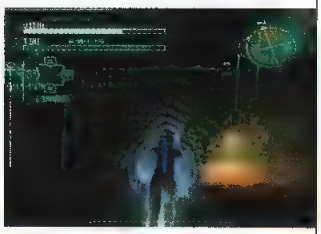
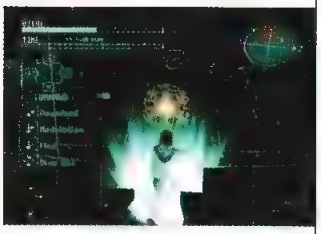
GAME INFO | PUB KONAMI | DEV KONAMI | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB PENDING



This is a game that wears its influences on its shapely sleeve. Ice could pass for Solid Snake's little sister. Come to think of it, so could Raiden...



▲ Ice invokes her "Slow" skill and shatters an enemy program.



▲ Character skills are activated by holding a shoulder button and quickly tapping the face buttons.

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

CY GIRLS

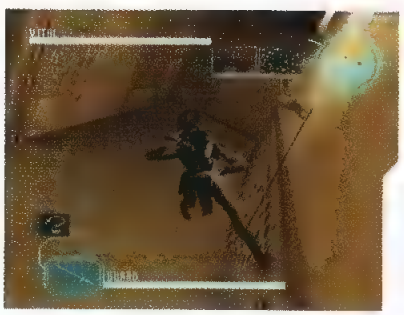
Metal Gear Solid + VR Missions + Tenchu + sexy ladies

Set in 2084, *Cy Girls* takes place in a world where corrupt corporations control energy and computer networks. At the game's start, you choose to control one of two main characters: Ice, a blonde bombshell with a love of guns and explosives, is a lot like Konami's other stealth hero, Solid Snake. On the other hand, the dark-haired ninja Aska seems straight out of *Tenchu.* She wields a grappling hook, runs along walls like *Shinobi's* Hotsuma, and prefers to slice and dice her enemies from up close, using blades and shuriken.

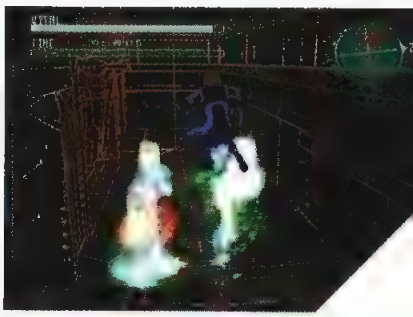
Ice and Aska play very differently, and the storylines differ greatly depending upon whom you choose. In fact, about the only thing the two have in common is their ability to hack computers, literally jacking their own psyches right into the machine (you can insert your own *Matrix, Tron,* or *Lawnmower Man* reference here). In the VR world inside a mainframe computer, the rules — and the game itself — change at a fundamental level. The backgrounds transform from offices and dojos to what you'd expect in *Tron,* and players only have ten minutes to complete their mission and return to the real world before their brain turns to slag. Battles inside play out like *Devil May Compute:* players can perform huge acrobatic feats, launch enemies into the air with an uppercut, then jump after them and deck them as they fall. However, the combat here is strictly hand to hand, as no weaponry is allowed inside.

Cy Girls has more than has a few new tricks up its sleeve, adopting a *Matrix*-style "some rules can be bent; others can be broken" philosophy. Players can enable skills to alter the characteristics of their virtual world by erecting phantom walls, slowing down time, and the like.

Where the game falls short is mainly in its presentation. While the cutscenes are fantastic, the in-game backgrounds are repetitive. Character animations appear to be lifted straight out of *Metal Gear Solid*, as are some of the enemies, the Otacon-type backup buddies, and even the interface, though it's more cumbersome than Snake's. Ice has problems jumping in VR, and it's possible to be shot through a wall in the real world. *Cy Girls* may not be the next *Metal Gear Solid,* but it's still well worth checking out. **DOUG TRUEMAN**



▶ Aska is so nimble, she can jump down upon an enemy, gut him, and run away along the wall before he realizes she's even in the room.



▲ The visual design of the virtual world owes a lot to *Tron.*

HOW IT STACKS UP

James Bond 007 in EON	8
Cy Girls	8
Mission Impossible: Surma	8
Rogue Ops	6
Enter The Matrix	6

PSM FINAL SCORE 8 — VERY GOOD

While it doesn't bring anything stellar to the genre, *Cy Girls* is a solid action title that offers hours of play.

GAME INFO | PUB EA | DEV EA | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB TEEN

JAMES BOND 007 IN EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Britain's top agent returns for his best adventure yet!

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

▼ The mission variety is better than ever this time, including multiple vehicles.

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

When you think of James Bond, what comes to mind? Wild weapons, cool gadgets, exotic cars, hot women, and big explosions, right? More than any of the MI-6 agent's previous videogame missions, *Everything or Nothing* manages to combine these essential Bond-ian elements with gameplay, story, and presentation that ultimately makes you feel like you're controlling a Bond movie.

The game has its adrenaline-charged moments and dull spots, but mostly does a great job of throwing a wide variety of different situations and challenges at the player. One moment, you're planting bombs; the next, you're repelling down a building in a full-blown firefight, before jumping into a car and chasing down a speeding train — all while jeeps and motorcycles try to run you down.

Other levels have you using Bond-worthy gadgets, such as explosive spider bots, sleeper darts, and stealth camouflage to sneak past enemies. Also, unlike the past couple of *Bond* adventures, this one's not viewed through the spy's first-person eyes, but in third-person. You get to see a very convincing likeness of Pierce Brosnan's Bond in action — shooting around corners, diving, and rolling away from enemy fire. When it comes to taking out the enemy, *Bond* has a smart lock-on system that allows for precise targeting adjustments (i.e. headshots) and a number of cool-looking hand-to-hand moves for disarming and taking down his foes in close quarters. There are also car-based levels that deliver a sort of *GTA*-lite experience, offering multiple paths and shortcuts.

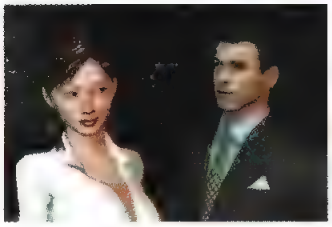
By and large, the missions are well designed, and controlling Bond feels great. There are some moments, such as when 007's acting as a gunner on a tank, or piloting an oddly slow helicopter, that the polish dulls, but the really good parts overcome them.

EON looks great, from the levels to Bond himself, and boasts the same quality of sound effects and music you'd expect from one of the films. As for multiplayer, the game's designers opted out of the traditional deathmatch mode tack-on, and instead created more than a dozen new, two-player cooperative missions that are a whole lot of fun to tackle online or off.

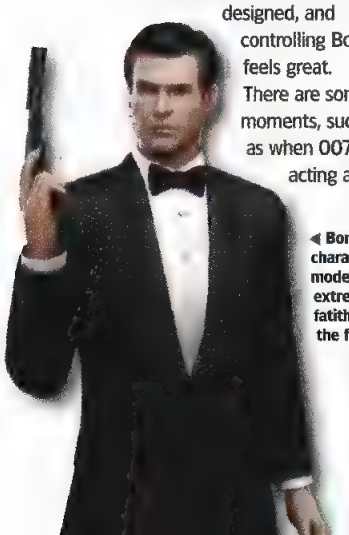
Factor in a hefty amount of unlockable items and modes that encourage you to replay missions for a platinum ranking, and you have one of the best "playable action movie" experiences going. Some of what's there could definitely stand more work, but, overall, this is an action experience not to be missed.

RANDY NELSON

▲ Cool gadgets are everywhere. See 007's SUV in this pic? No? That's the idea.



▲ As usual, Jimmy boy tends to have plenty of sweet, young espionage-type things just begging for some of his spare time.



◀ Bond's character model is extremely faithful to the films.

▲ Sure, you catch the ladies' attention more easily in a tux, but sometimes it's better to blend in.

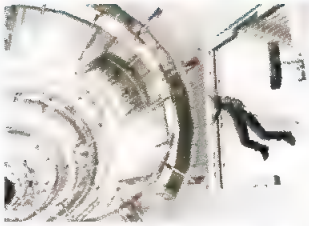
HOW IT STACKS UP

James Bond in EON	8
James Bond: Nightfire	8
Rise To Honor	7
Rogue Ops	6
kill.switch	6

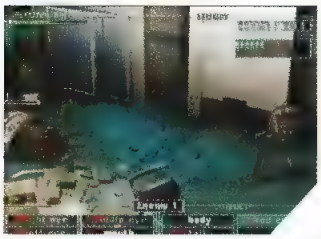
PSM FINAL SCORE 8

VERY GOOD

This game takes all of the classic Bond elements and combines them with solid control, and gameplay variety. Some of the levels are letdowns, but overall, it's a satisfying title.



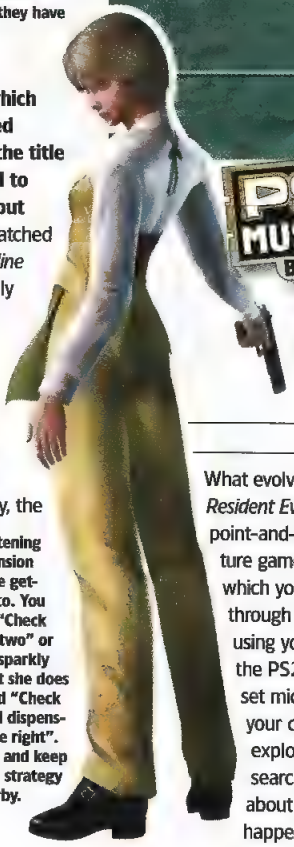
▲ Some sections of the station aren't rotating, and therefore lack artificial gravity, which will leave you swimming in midair.



▲ The graphics aren't stellar, but they have a very solid, cohesive look.

GAME INFO | PUB KONAMI KOEA | DEV SCEJ | TYPE SURVIVAL/HORROR | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE

▶ Be careful what instructions you give Rio during battle. If you just say "Flee", she'll try, but she might run right into a second enemy.



PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

LIFELINE

In space, no one can hear you scream... except for her

It's strange that Sony, which developed and published *Lifeline* in Japan under the title *Operator's Side*, decided to pass on a U.S. release, but we're thrilled that Konami snatched it up and brought it over. *Lifeline* has some rough edges — truly innovative games usually do — but it rocks anyway.

Like most survival horror titles, *Lifeline* begins with a catastrophe. The JSL space station, the Earth's first outer space hotel, is celebrating its Grand Opening. Unfortunately, the jubilation turns suddenly to mutilation when the party is pooped by what appear to be hordes of aliens, which quickly set about dismembering everyone in sight. In truly heroic form, your response to this onslaught is to black out.

▶ Rio's listening comprehension takes some getting used to. You can't say, "Check dispenser two" or "Get that sparkly thing", but she does understand "Check the second dispenser from the right". Keep at it, and keep this issue's strategy guide nearby.

When you awake, you find yourself trapped in what appears to be the station's security room, seated at a computer terminal that gives you access to all of the station's surveillance cameras. Through one of these cameras, you meet a young waitress named Rio, possibly the only other survivor of the attack.

That's where the hook comes in. Being trapped in your location, you must rely upon Rio to rescue both of you. She, on the other hand, needs you to tell her what to do.

What evolves is a sort of *Resident Evil*/old-school point-and-click adventure game hybrid, in which you guide Rio through the game using your voice and the PS2's USB headset microphone. At your command, she explores the station, searching for clues about what really happened, making her way to you, and fighting off various monstrosities.

For the most part, this is golden. The biggest reason is because Rio is immediately endearing, being both well written and skillfully vocalized by *She Spies'* Krista Miller. There are moments when she's scared to go into a certain room, or when she revisits a difficult memory, that carry genuine feeling. There's even a decent plot, and the music is wonderful at times.

Granted, the voice recognition isn't quite perfect just yet (especially troublesome during combat), and there are times when you'll go mad trying to figure out the specific noun the game needs you to use when referring to a particular item — for instance, a piece of paper might be a "report", "document", "pamphlet", "magazine", or something else entirely. And the graphics are only average. However, when it's all said and done, this is a great game, and totally unlike anything that's come before it.

ERIC BRATCHER

HOW IT STACKS UP

Fatal Frame 2	8
Primal	8
Lifeline	8
Silent Hill 3	7
Disaster Report	7

▲ During battle, you can usually switch into a first-person view to give yourself a Rio's-eye look at the action.

▲ Some of the most compelling moments in the game occur when Rio's personality comes through during a discussion.

PSM FINAL SCORE 8

VERY GOOD

Lifeline is a wonderfully innovative game that provides a completely unique experience. Bring a Thesaurus and enunciate clearly, and you'll love this new gameplay sensation.

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Mild Lyrics

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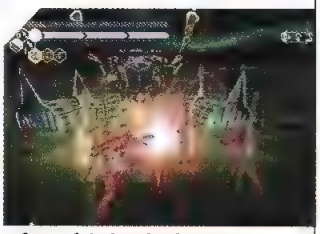
activision.com
mtxmototrax.com

GAME INFO | PUB SEGA | DEV SEGA WOW | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE

▲ The bloodthirsty sword Akujiki is involved in the story, but you begin the game wielding a different weapon.



▲ Some of the boss battles are very challenging — luckily, lady H has got ninja magic.

NIGHTSHADE

Sega sharpens Shinobi's blade

If you've played *Shinobi* — the PS2 version, not the old '80s game — here's what you can expect from the sequel-in-all-but-name that is *Nightshade:* better level design, prettier graphics, improved control, more varied enemies, bigger bosses, and, overall, a lot more polish.

For everyone who didn't experience Sega's remake of the classic arcade game, here's the skinny. *Nightshade* is about, and stars, a ninja. But rather than a total stealth-fest, it's a full tilt action game to the core. The sexy lead character, Hibana, has a lot of great moves to use against the Hellspawn who are overrunning Tokyo. She can double jump, stealth dash, cling to walls, kick to break their guard, slash them with her katana, dice them with her short swords, and stun them with shuriken. There are also several flavors of ninja magic she can call upon. In a nutshell, she's one very well equipped character in terms of moves — although making the most of them takes lots of practice and athleticism on the behalf of your fingers. However, it's a game that rewards patience and mastery of its perhaps-a little-too-cumbersome control scheme with the feeling that you're constantly becoming more skilled. The more skilled you become, the more fun this game is.

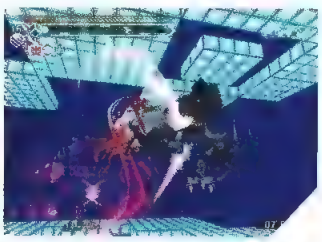
Nightshade certainly improves on the stage design of *Shinobi*, offering a lot more variety in terms of the situations and environments in which Hibana finds herself. There's more freedom to move about them, and they simply look like a whole lot more work went into them. The enemies and bosses require more brainwork to defeat, which is good, although some of the end-of-level Hellspawn will really raise your blood pressure. The graphics are pretty, with moments of "Wow!," but you won't need one of those drool suction thingies from the dentist's office on standby.

The camera, while better than *Shinobi*'s, could still use some work. There'll be times you'll simply get trapped in corners by larger enemies and bosses, and not be able to see Hibana at all. The act of clinging and running along walls can also be awkward at times, especially when you're trying to strike wall-clinging enemies who seem within reach, but require you to jump off the wall, then back onto it to line yourself up just right.

When the credits roll, you've unlocked all the hidden characters, and put this game back on the shelf, you'll definitely have had fun and one hell of a challenge. Just be sure to have some ice standing by to stick your hands into. **RANDY NELSON**

◀ Hibana's got more moves, and more curves, than Hotsuma.

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE



▲ As this image shows, level design has gotten a lot more varied and creative.

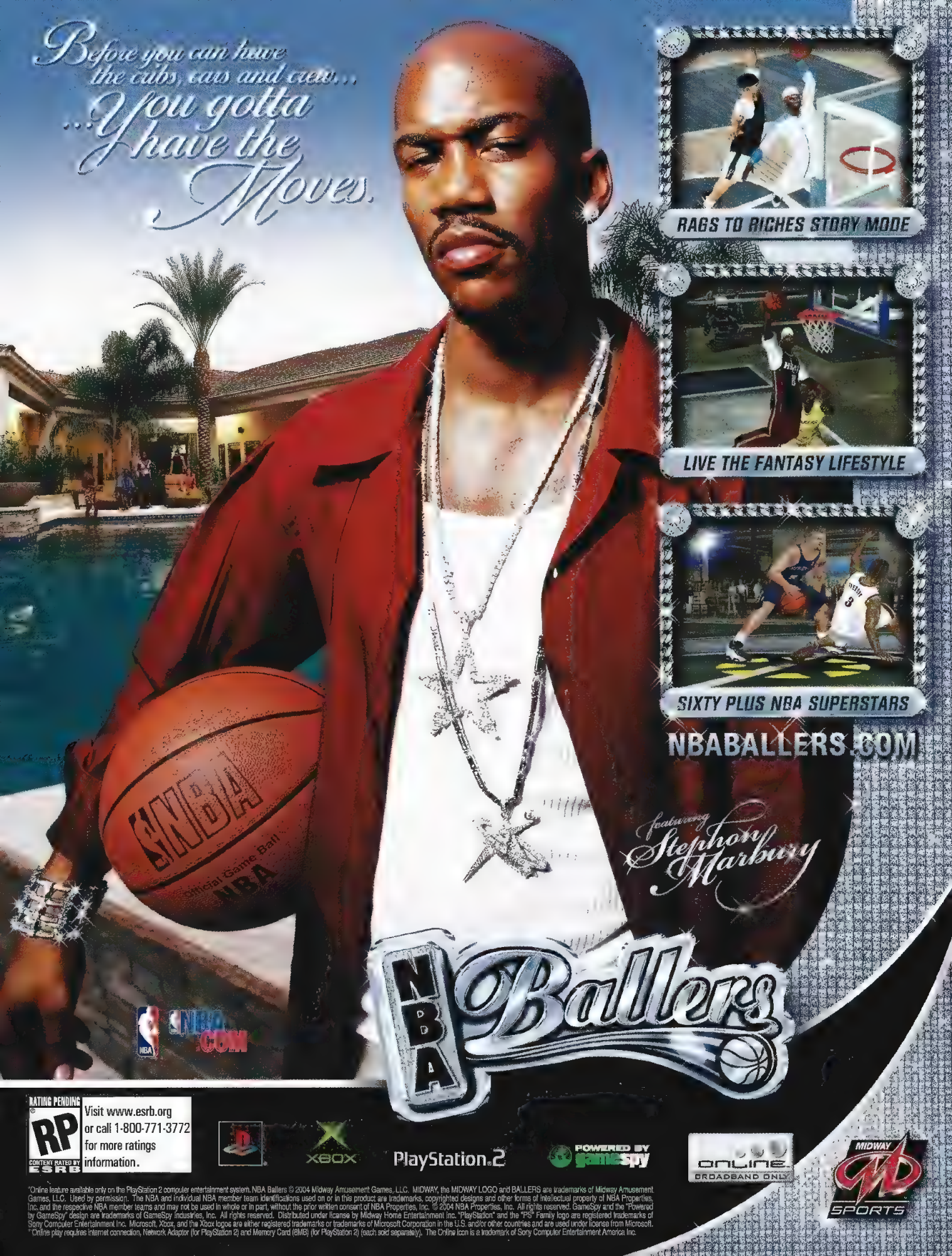
▲ Hibana may have failed "Ninja Sneaking 101," but she aced "Slice and Dice 321."

PSM FINAL SCORE 8 — VERY GOOD

Nightshade improves on ***Shinobi*** in every respect, resulting in a fast-paced, pure action game with a fresh feel to its gameplay that's unique in a genre lacking in new ideas.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Maximo Vs. Army Of Zin	9
Nightshade	8
Ninja	7
Chaos Legion	7
Shinobi	6



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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence

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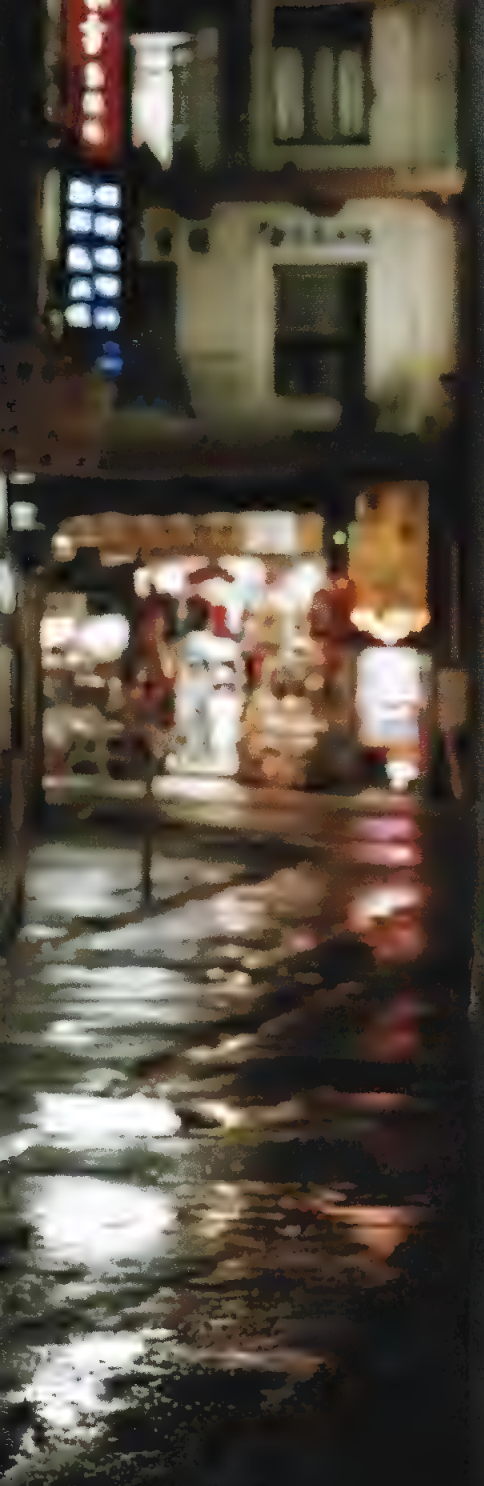
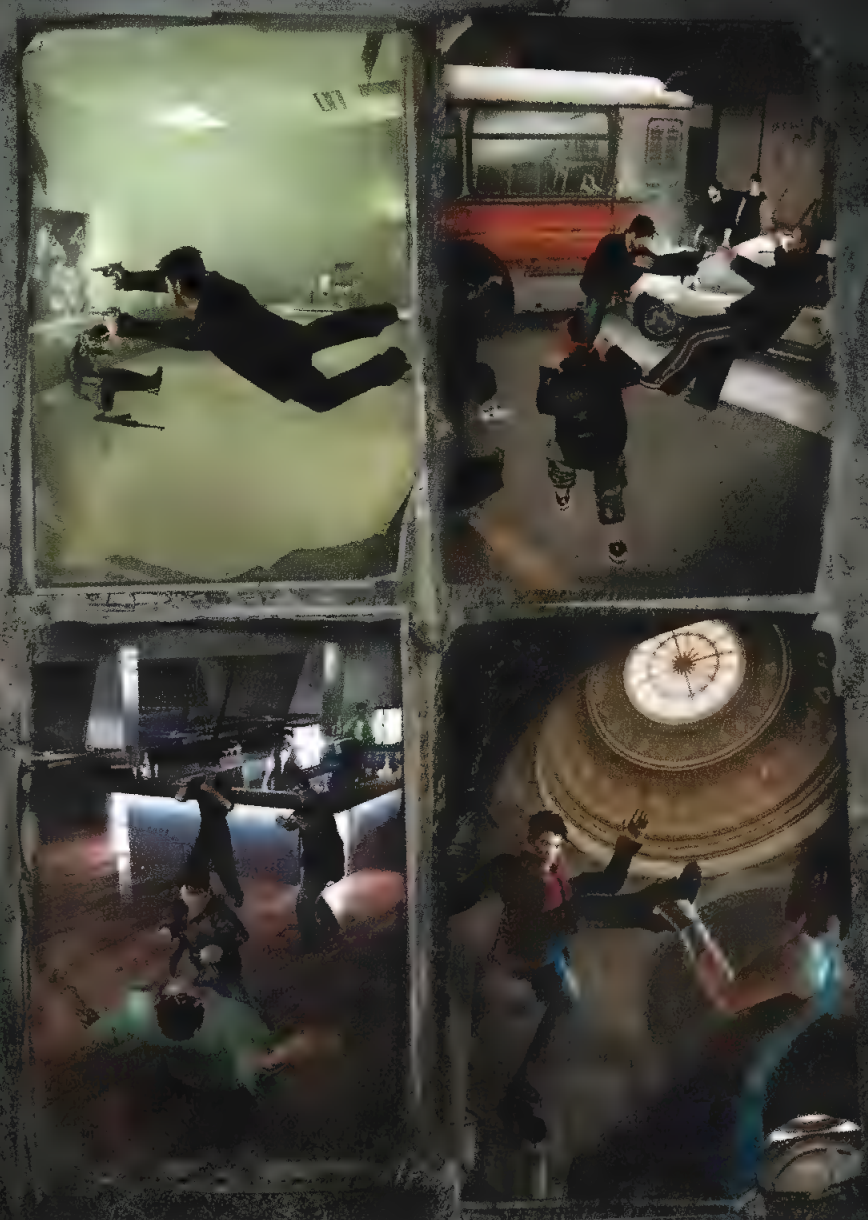
JET LI RISE TO HONOR 義氣





A dying man's last wish. An undercover cop who's running out of time. Jet Li is Kit Yun in Rise to Honor, the story of a cop sworn to fulfill his duty, yet bound by a promise to a powerful crime lord. Now Kit must enter a shadowy world where, to preserve his honor, he'll have to risk his life. But as his enemies will soon learn, sometimes the one who is most honorable…is also the most deadly.

PlayStation 2

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

▲ The framerate isn't solid, but the visuals are still very easy on the eyes.

▲ Hint: if you want the wiseguys to think you're hard, don't try to order a Zima.

▲ They don't make cars like they used to... and that's probably a good thing.

▲ Break the law too often and you'll find yourself running from the cops.

GAME INFO | PUB TAKE TWO INT. | DEV GATHERING/ILLUSION | TYPE ADVENTURE | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE

◀ There weren't too many sniper rifles back in the day, but tommy guns and sawed-off shotguns definitely don't disappoint.

MAFIA

Grand(father) Theft Auto

PSM FINAL SCORE 7

GOOD
Mafia is a kinder, gentler – and slower – *Grand Theft Auto*. If Tommy Vercetti was too much for you, give Tommy Angelo a try.

***Mafia* is an attempt to fuse a zoot suit-wearing, tommy gun-toting, 1930s setting with the** style of gameplay found in Rockstar's über-smash *Vice City*. It's a hell of an idea, and it almost works.

The core of the game's structure is solid, as are the plot, pacing, and graphics. *Mafia* tells the story of Tommy Angelo, a humble taxi owner who finds his life forever altered when a pair of thugs, working for the local Don, "hire" him to ditch some unhappy customers. He damages his vehicle during the escape, but Don Salieri pays him handsomely for his services. One thing leads to another, and Tommy quickly goes from picking up fares to picking off rival gang members, running vehicular errands, and occasionally demonstrating that baseball bats aren't just for baseball.

There's a lot to like in *Mafia*. The background graphics are so detailed, they occasionally border on stunning, and one could glance quickly at a cutscene and mistake it for a television show. The voice acting is superb, the vehicles well detailed, and the plot fitting with the setting. Unlike Tommy Vercetti, Tommy Angelo actually has a conscience, and it comes back to haunt him.

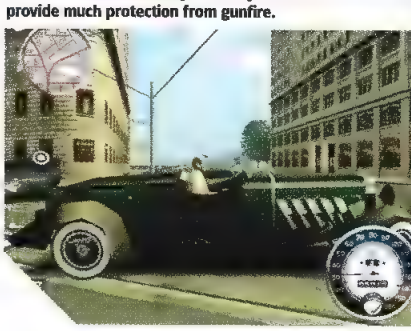
The problem is that the game's PC roots haven't been completely overcome. The frame rate stutters, and both the hand-to-hand combat system and the control scheme were obviously designed with a mouse and keyboard in mind, and not reconfigured thoroughly enough for the move to PS2. We found at least one notable bug: it's possible to shoot someone several times in the head, only to have them not only continue living, but return fire. Finally, and most importantly, the game's pacing drags under brutal load times. Crossing the city's main bridge takes over thirty seconds, and the disc spins for what seems like an eternity between certain missions. To make matters worse, trial and error is often the only way to feel your way through a mission. This wouldn't be a problem if players could load a quick save and spring right back into the action, but you can't. Thus, PS2 owners could easily spend more time loading a mission than playing it.

On the plus side, there are some console-only extras, like a racing mode that lets you hit the asphalt with old-fashioned hot rods. Despite a few porting flaws, *Mafia* is still very close to being an offer we can't refuse. **DOUG TRUEMAN**

HOW IT STACKS UP

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	9
Grand Theft Auto 3	9
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	8
Mafia	7
Roadkill	7

▼ Convertables are classy, but they don't provide much protection from gunfire.



GAME INFO | PUB CAPCOM | DEV CAPCOM | TYPE FIGHTING | MAX PLAYERS FOUR | ESRB MATURE

▲ We hadn't guessed it, but the *Onimusha* universe is perfectly suited for an arcade-style, multiplayer brawler.

▲ Needless to say, elemental magic plays a large role in the combat.

▲ There are roughly two dozen characters in the game, ranging from the series' heroes to its demonic villains.

ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

Forget brothers smashing — we've got samurai slashing!

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

***Onimusha: Blade Warriors* is a lot of things: tried-and-true, long-awaited, new, odd, and** largely rewarding. An undead-and-samurai-flavored answer to multiplayer games, such as *Super Smash Bros.* and Capcom's own *Power Stone* series, *Blade Warriors* puts characters from the *Onimusha* series into a high-energy slash-'em-up featuring a tweaked control scheme. Four-way brawls with an emphasis on collectable power-ups are the norm, and because the mayhem is confined to a 2D plane, tactical depth results not from fancy, 3D footwork, but from tons of extra elements. These include special attacks, some unexpectedly comedic weapons, and power-up fuel in the form of soul energy released whenever a character takes a hit.

The modified controls are familiar enough, with the face buttons handling slash attacks, kicks, and a new jump, while the shoulder controls handle guarding and lock-on duties. Repeated tapping of the attack buttons will trigger combos, while simply holding a button down builds to a greater single attack. Meanwhile, the guard function uses a defense gauge that naturally rebuilds at a slow rate, so once you run it down, you'll start taking damage. Issen strikes are still here, and while they're not the one-hit kills they are in the standard *Onimusha* games, they still chip away at the enemy's life.

Blade Warriors offers 20 stages, their respective backgrounds taken from previous *Onimusha* games: many are triple-layered affairs, enabling players to range freely from one level to the other, some of which are nicely booby-trapped. Special items can be located and equipped in the single player game (along with additional characters and levels), and resultant beefed-up characters can even be used in multiplayer modes.

Whether stocked with player-guided or AI-controlled foes, the Versus mode is the very picture of Chaos — characters can battle in free-for-all mode or allied in teams, and the visuals manage to keep up with the violence at all times. Solo matches may pit you against six enemies at once, but it's the multiplayer where you really have to be on your toes. Doubtless, there will be some gamers grumbling that, darn it, this isn't the four-course meal that a true sequel would be, and they're right; it's a multiplayer snack-tray to tide us all over, but it's a good one. Dig in — we're sure it won't spoil your dinner. **CHRIS HUDAK**

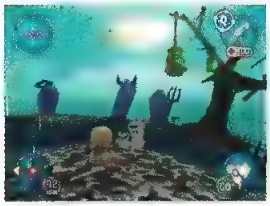
HOW IT STACKS UP

Soul Calibur II	9
Onimusha: Blade Warriors	8
Dragonball Z:Budokai 2	7
Bloody Roar 4	6
Backyard Wrestling	4

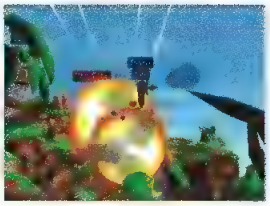
PSM FINAL SCORE 8 — VERY GOOD

It's not a true sequel, nor is it meant to be; it's more a kind of *Super Smash Bros*-type multiplayer madness. It's also good fun.

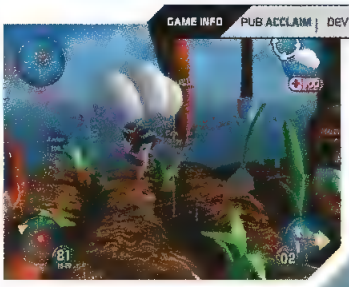
▼ The cartoon look of the 2D series loses a bit of vibrance in going 3D, but it's still fun to look at.



▼ Kiss Paula goodbye. Worms can't swim, so any dip in the drink is a trip to Davy Jones' Locker.



GAME INFO | PUB ACCLAIM | DEV TEAM 17 | TYPE STRATEGY | MAX PLAYERS SIXTEEN | ESRB RATING TEEN



▲ Battlefield settings range from frozen lakes to barnyards, graveyards, and beyond.

▼ The voices are a riot, though we could have done with fewer voice choices, but each with more samples.

WORMS 3D

Muddle of Honor: Annelid Assault

Once upon a time, there was a game called *Scorched Earth*, in which two tanks blasted each other in side-view 2D. It rocked, but a few years later, Team 17 made it even better by exchanging the tanks for teams of cartoon worms with outrageous weapons.

Now, the decade-old struggle for supremacy among annelid armies has moved into full 3D. All of the essential *Worms* elements are here: crazy cartoon voices, fully deformable environments, and nice mission variety. There's even a random game parameters/map generator.

Unfortunately, the newly 3D gameplay isn't polished at all. The camera is constantly adopting an awkward angle. More importantly, aiming is frustratingly random because, while it's easy to extrapolate the arc of a bazooka shot in side-view 2D, it's another thing entirely to try to guess it in first-person or top-down view. Add to that the fact that the vast majority of our casualties came not from enemy fire, but because our worm fell through the slats of a wooden bridge, missed a "gimme" jump, or otherwise randomly self-snuffed — and the gameplay emphasis is unintentionally split between devising strategy and fighting with the game's mechanics. It's still fun, but flawed as well. **ERIC BRATCHER**

PSM FINAL SCORE 6

OKAY

The series' charm is pretty intact and the random game generator gives it legs (so to speak), but there's no online and the switch to 3D is really rugged.

▲ This game isn't designed as a graphical showcase, but certain battlefield events are still presented with a bit of artistic flair

GAME INFO | PUB KOEI | DEV KOEI | TYPE STRATEGY | MAX PLAYERS EIGHT | ESRB RATING EVERYONE

▲ Players have a wide range of tasks demanding their time, but it all falls under the heading of "being the man."

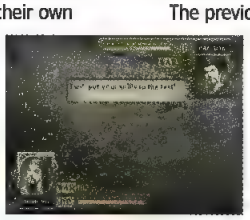
▲ Success is all about making alliances, then conquering your allies. It's just like Survivor, only these guys dress better.

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS IX

Ninth time's the charm?

PSM MUST-BUY BRONZE

Directly opposite of the man-to-man, in the trenches mayhem that is Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* series, is this technical military/empire building simulation. Split into strategy and action phases, players are able to build their own vision of ancient China in any number of ways, using a simple interface and a whole lot of micromanagement. You conduct the diplomacy, you devise the battle plans, train the troops, etc. It follows the series' established formula, but differs from some of its more contemporary chums in the increased control that users will have on the battlefield. It's definitely more interactive than its predecessors and similar in several ways to KOEI's other strategy series, *Dynasty Tactics*.



▲ A little trash talk before battle may not help, but it can't hurt either, right?

The previous two *Romance* titles have expanded upon the approach a player can take by offering several different player classes with varying functions, so that players can experience the game in different ways, depending upon their desired role. *ROT3K9* has decided to go back to the old school way of doing things however, and has opted instead to give you complete control of your nation as the ruler only. And while it does have its advantages, we kind of miss the variety that the last two iterations have given us — even if they were limited in their range.

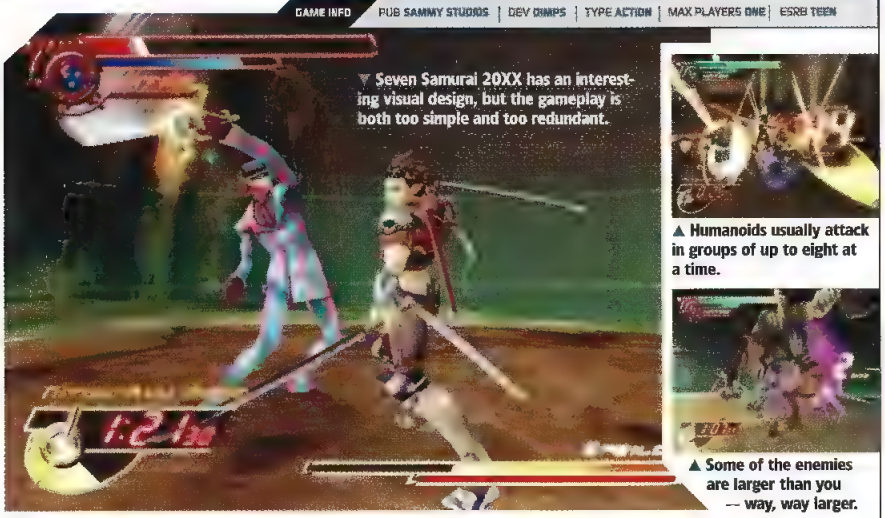
That said, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX* is still one of the best strategy games available, and well worth the time and money its fans will likely invest. **JEREMY DUNHAM**

PSM FINAL SCORE 8

VERY GOOD

It may not be the most advanced sequel, but for fans of hardcore number crunching and statistic-laden simulations, still among the best strategy titles available for PS2.

GAME INFO | PUB SAMMY STUDIOS | DEV OMIPS | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB TEEN



▼ Seven Samurai 20XX has an interesting visual design, but the gameplay is both too simple and too redundant.

▲ Humanoids usually attack in groups of up to eight at a time.

▲ Some of the enemies are larger than you — way, way larger.

SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

A fantastic movie becomes a misguided, under-achieving game

The film, *Seven Samurai*, is a brooding, splendorous story set in samurai-era Japan, shot in black and white by Akira Kurosawa and released in 1954. *Seven Samurai 20XX*, on the other hand, is a strange, future reworking of the *Shinobi* formula with wall-running removed and a rudimentary auto-targeting system added, set in a grimy, industrial future where everyone has *Final Fantasy* clothes and Flock of Seagulls hair.

You play the role of Natoe, a young, self-assured samurai with about as much masculinity as Clay Aiken... until the action starts. He's on a mission to defend a village from advancing enemy hordes known as "humanoids" — who, for the record, are not the same as "humans". Natoe explores several confusingly designed levels to recruit additional samurai to help, but in just the first example of this game's misguided development, he remains the only playable character... in a game called *Seven Samurai*... based on a movie about *Seven Samurai*... go figure.

The story may be ironic, but the gameplay is just redundant. Natoe attacks with ⊡, guards with △, dodges with ⊗, and enters "Nitoh-Ryu Mode" when R1 and L1 are pressed together. Various combinations of these maneuvers result in linked attacks, which are both obscure and also mostly useless because you can typically get the same result by just pounding ⊡. "Nitoh-Ryu" allows Natoe to briefly unhook a second katana and light up the generally rust-colored, *Fifth Element*-style locales with brightly colored sword trails and rainbow explosions. It's pretty, but often triggers slowdown, which cripples the player's timing of the more complex combos.

So, the cycle becomes: you enter a room, up to eight enemies at a time appear, and you hack everything apart until a green arrow points your way to another room. Eventually, the monotony is broken up by a one-on-one boss fight, but because health is scarce, you'll usually enter a boss fight with too little health remaining for you to learn and overcome their annoying attack patterns. Thus, you'll have to restart the level.

Characters animate well and, thanks to the French comic book artist Moebius, have enough charisma and accoutrements to compare with Squaresoft's flamboyant do-gooders. Music alternates between metal guitar-wailing and Yanni-inspired soundscapes, but remains hokey throughout. Vocal stylings are mainly horrific and (in the case of a ridiculously gay-sounding Richard Simmons lookalike in bondage gear) occasionally border on offensive, while the script itself is bulging with bad dialog, grammatical mistakes and mistranslations. Ultimately, *Seven Samurai 20XX* is a battle royale — with cheese. **DAVID S. HODGSON**

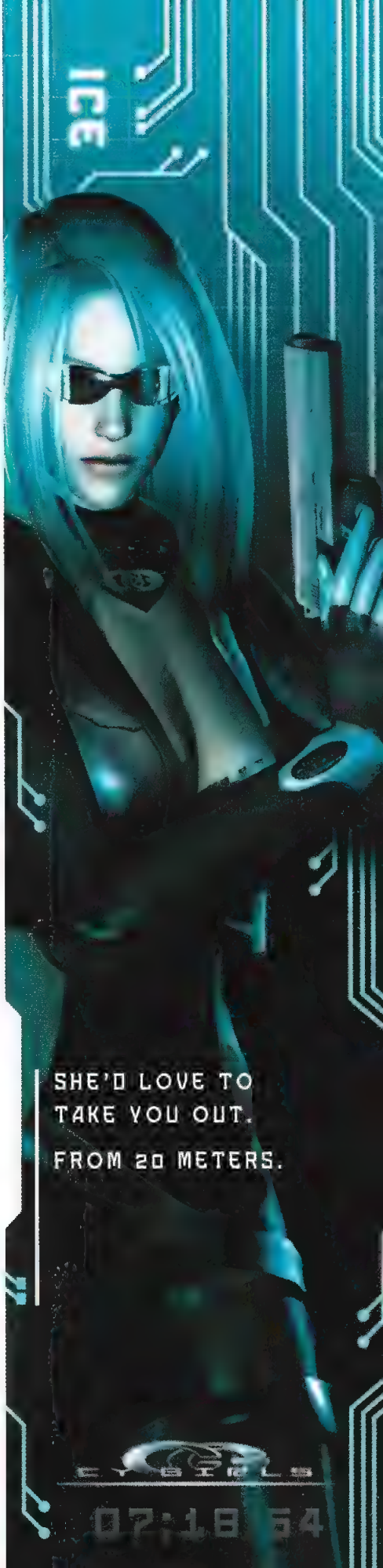
HOW IT STACKS UP

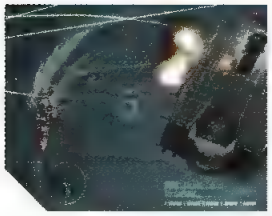
Dynasty Warriors 4 XL	8
Nightshade	8
Rise to Honor	7
I-Ninja	7
Seven Samurai 20XX	6

PSM FINAL SCORE 6

OKAY

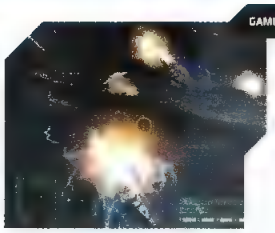
A reasonably solid brawler, but bad dialog, slowdown, and button-mashing cheapness bring this opus almost to a grinding halt.





▲ Your opponents have built huge, powerful, customized ships! Don't worry. You can, too!

▲ All your battles won't be at sea. You'll have to pound the ground at times, as well.



▲ Either these new X-ray weapons are intense, or someone put tin foil in the microwave again...

GAME INFO | PUB KOEI | DEV MICRO CABIN | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB RATING TEEN

▲ Yes, it's true... Billy Mitchell was right. A tiny plane can sink a huge battleship.

NAVAL OPS: COMMANDER

It's not just a job... it's an adventure...

Navies have been the ultimate expression of a nation's force from the ancient Greeks up to today's Aegis-equipped armadas. Now Koei is looking for a few good men to take to the high seas in defense of their country in *Naval Ops: Commander*, the sequel to *Naval Ops: Warship Gunner*.

With over 80 stages (more than twice as many as the first title), hundreds of real and fantasy weapons, and control over aircraft, the burgeoning naval commander will find many ways to enforce his nation's political will upon the enemy.

You can choose to model your navy after any one of four of the world's greatest (Japan, Germany, England, United States), plus you can also customize ships to the point where they look and perform more like the Argo/Yamato of the *StarBlazers* cartoon, complete with futuristic laser cannons.

That's not to say this fun to play title is all smooth sailing, though; there are reefs and shoals...

The control scheme is a bit clumsy, especially when trying to perform resource management or save a game. The graphics aren't exactly first cabin, either, although the sound effects are stellar.

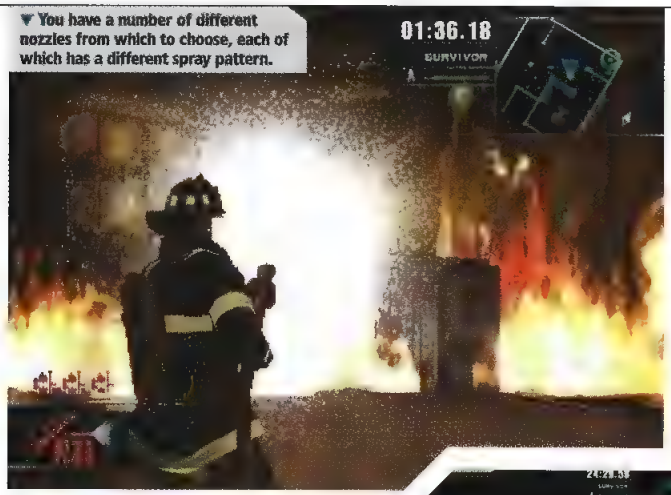
If you love sea battles, you're gonna love this game. What are your orders, Commander? **BILL DONOHUE**

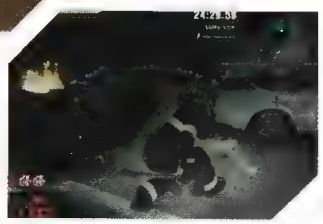
PSM FINAL SCORE 7

GOOD

Though the graphics don't make you feel like you're sailing o'er the bounding main (the ocean, you scurvy landlubbers!), the gameplay will prompt you to say "Ahoy, matey!"

▼ You have a number of different nozzles from which to choose, each of which has a different spray pattern.

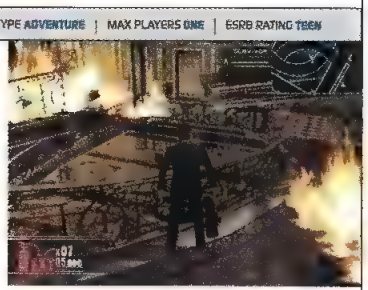




▲ Thanks to a tragic past, Dean is driven to rescue everyone threatened by every fire.

GAME INFO | PUB KONAMI KOREA | DEV KCET | TYPE ADVENTURE | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB RATING TEEN

▲ Graphically, the models are average, but there are some nice particle effects and heat ripple effects.



▲ Sometimes, even a firefighter takes a day off... until something nearby goes up in flames.

FIREFIGHTER F.D. 18

Is it hot in here or is it just me?

Just as *Saving Private Ryan's* opening scene instantly demonstrated that a soldier's life can be harrowing, *Firefighter F.D. 18* shows that firefighting isn't all big, red trucks and spotted dogs. This is a dangerous business, fraught with unforeseeable peril, and Konami's latest is the most engaging translation of the firefighting fact/myth you're likely to see.

As veteran firefighter Dean McGregor, facing this peril is what *Firefighter F.D. 18* is all about: hosing, axing and dodging your way through the flaming, exploding, collapsing and otherwise dynamically changing firestorms. Just keeping your flame-retardant ass intact is tough enough, but McGregor is personally driven to also save all the innocents trapped in the flames before they suffocate, burn or otherwise perish.

The action is equal parts Hollywood and reality: McGregor's hose is infinitely long (go ahead and snicker; we'll wait), and he seems overly adept at calling for backup. Yet he confronts decidedly real considerations like water-dispersal patterns, different types of fires, rescue routes that change or disappear without warning, backdraft, and even monstrous blazes that seem to attack — and die — almost like sentient, malevolent entities.

It's true that the voice-acting isn't necessarily up to the highest thespian standards and that the raw gameplay of dousing fires and saving lives — ALL the lives, dammit — can get a little on the repetitive, unforgiving side. But *Firefighter F.D. 18* still does its job well, if earnestly. **CHRIS HUDAK**

PSM FINAL SCORE 7

GOOD

The pressure and redundancy might annoy some gamers, but it looks and feels appropriately hectic — and it's a morally upstanding, heroically-themed videogame.

HANDS-ON!

Something new is in our sights...

Gamester FPS Master

M.S.R.P.: $29.99

At first glance, this controller looks slightly comical and possibly disastrous, as if a Dual Shock 2 and Lara Croft's twin pistols got together and had a child, which was then raised by H.R. Geiger. The twin sticks are there, but the normal controller's handles have been replaced with twin gunstocks (complete with triggers), the buttons are all in funny places, and the whole mess has a funky, "in the future, things will be industrial and cool, but also beat-up" sort of look. Naturally, not even a team of trained, undead ninja Dobermans with laser beams on their heads could have kept us from plugging it in to see what happened.

The funny thing is that, after a brief adjustment period, we grew to like the little monster. Basically, the R1 and L1 buttons are the triggers, and your ring and index fingers rest on the other buttons: R2 and ⊗ on the left hand, L2 and △ on the right. The remaining two face buttons, ○ and □, join SELECT and START on the top. Squeezing the triggers to fire gives first-person shooters a visceral, more realistic feel (though your finger may get tired unless you've played tons of light gun games) that we really enjoyed, and we almost never had to take our thumbs off of the analog sticks. It's got a nice, hefty rumble, and there are even three preset control configurations that you can program to your liking, inverting the sticks (yay!) or changing button assignments. Sometimes, customized controllers don't work well at all, but in this case, it does.

ERIC BRATCHER

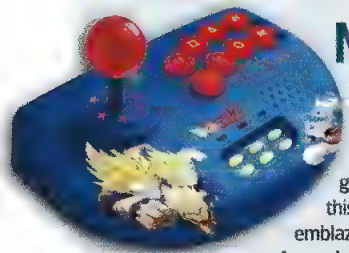
▲ If you love fragtastic FPS action, you should at least try out this unique controller.

PSM FINAL SCORE 8

You may need to be hardcore for it to be worth the money, but this contraption makes first-person shooters even more fun than they already are.

Nuby Collector's Edition Dragonball Z Arcade Stick

M.S.R.P.: $29.99



▲ It's not always easy to find Nuby's products, but you can track this stick down at www.zstore.com.

Nuby's recent *Soul Calibur II*-themed arcade stick really pleased us, so we were eager to get our hands on this new controller, emblazoned with images of everybody's favorite Super Saiyans Goku, Gohan, and Vegeta, as well as two of their most diabolical enemies, Dabura and Buu (though we'd swear Buu had eaten Dabura by the time he became lean and muscular). Were we pleased? Well, yes and no. Like the *Dragonball Z* games themselves, the license is prominent, but the functionality is a little clunky.

The thing is, while this isn't necessarily a bad stick for only $30 bones, it's nowhere near as nice as the *Soul Calibur* stick. We're not psychic, but we're guessing that Nuby is expecting a younger, smaller-handed, less discerning audience for the device. The base is constructed of sturdy metal, but its downsized shape isn't nearly as ergodynamic and the buttons are both far smaller and notably more stiff to the touch. The control stick is a ball-top (more correctly, a *Dragonball*-top) this time and is microswitch activated, though we could only hear the switches some of the time, which left us skeptical of the stick's quality of construction and longevity.

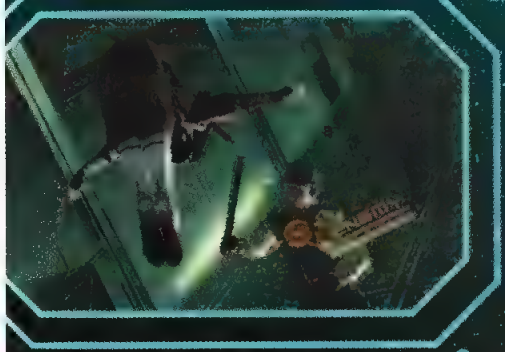
There were a few nice bells and whistles; each button is analog and can be set to Turbo individually, and there's also a rumble feature built into the palm rest. Three bottom-mounted suction cups also do a fair job of keeping the stick locked down on a smooth surface. There aren't any pre-programmed macros or added *DBZ*-specific functions, but of course, there's the *Dragonball Z*-flavored decorative styling, which should appeal to fans, who are the only folks likely to prefer this stick over any other, including most of Nuby's other models. ERIC BRATCHER

PSM FINAL SCORE 5

There are better sticks out there. Unless you're a *DBZ* junkie, grab Nuby's *Soul Calibur* stick or a secondhand ShadowBlade from eBay instead.

2 GIRLS. 2 WORLDS. 1 HARDCORE MISSION.

2 DISCS • 2 ADVENTURES



CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON: ASKA, WITH HER LETHAL NINJA SKILLS - OR ICE, A FIREARMS EXPERT WITH NERVES OF STEEL. THEN TAKE THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL FROM THE REAL WORLD INTO CYBERSPACE, WHERE THE RULES ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT - BUT THE ACTION'S EVERY BIT AS HARDCORE.

CY GIRLS

PlayStation.2

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

KONAMI

WWW.KONAMI.COM/USA

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SCOREBOARD

Don't buy a game until you check here first!

SCORE ARCHIVE

Iss.	Month	Game Name	Score	Genre	Publisher
82	Mar-04	AirForce Delta Strike	6	Air Combat	Konami
82	Mar-04	Champions Of Norrath	9	Action/RPG	Sony Online
82	Mar-04	Culdcept	8	Strategy	NEC/Capcom
82	Mar-04	Fallout: BOS	8	Action	Vivendi Un.
82	Mar-04	Ghost Recon: JS	8	FPS	Ubisoft
82	Mar-04	NFL Street	9	Sports	EA
82	Mar-04	Rise To Honor	7	Action	Sony CEA
82	Mar-04	R-Type Final	7	Action	Eidos
82	Mar-04	Star Trek: SU	5	Action	TDK
82	Mar-04	Winning Eleven 7	9	Sports	Konami
82	Mar-04	World Pool 2004	6	Sports	Jaleco
82	Mar-04	Wrath Unleashed	7	Action	LucasArts
81	Feb-04	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	8	Action	Interplay
81	Feb-04	EverQuest OA: Frontiers	8	MMORPG	Sony Online
81	Feb-04	Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	8	Horror	Tecmo
81	Feb-04	Final Fantasy X-2	9	RPG	Square Enix
81	Feb-04	Intellivision Lives!	8	Collection	Intellivision
81	Feb-04	King Of Fighters 2000/2001	7	Fighting	SNK
81	Feb-04	Lowrider	6	Rhythm	Jaleco
81	Feb-04	Lupin The 3rd: TOTSK	5	Action	Bandai
81	Feb-04	Max Payne 2: TFOMP	8	Action	Rockstar/Take 2
81	Feb-04	Maximo Vs. Army Of Zin	9	Action	Capcom
81	Feb-04	Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	8	Action	Atari
81	Feb-04	Sonic Heroes	7	Platform	Sega
81	Feb-04	Terminator 3: ROTM	5	Action	Atari
80	Jan-04	Battlestar Galactica	5	Action	Vivendi
80	Jan-04	Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	6	FPS	Activision
80	Jan-04	The Fairly Oddparents	6	Platform	THQ
80	Jan-04	Fugitive Hunter: War On Terror	3	Action	Encore
80	Jan-04	.hack//QUARANTINE	7	RPG	Bandai
80	Jan-04	Harry Potter And Sorcerer's Stone	7	Adventure	EA
80	Jan-04	The Hobbit	5	Adventure	Vivendi
80	Jan-04	Looney Tunes: Back In Action	7	Action	EA
80	Jan-04	Manhunt	8	Action	Rockstar
80	Jan-04	Mobile Suit Gundam: EIS	7	Action	Bandai
80	Jan-04	R: Racing Evolution	7	Racing	Namco
80	Jan-04	The Sim's Bustin' Out	8	Sim	EA
80	Jan-04	Spawn: Armageddon	7	Adventure	Namco
80	Jan-04	SpongeBob SquarePants	7	Action	THQ
80	Jan-04	Spy Hunter 2	6	Driving	Midway
80	Jan-04	Tokyo Extreme Racer 3	5	Racing	Crave
80	Jan-04	Tony Hawk's Underground	9	Sports	Activision
80	Jan-04	True Crime: Streets of L.A.	8	Action	Activision
80	Jan-04	Virtual On: MARZ	5	Action	Sega
80	Jan-04	Whiplash	6	Action	Eidos
79	Hol-03	Backyard Wrestling	4	Fighting	Eidos
79	Hol-03	Beyond Good & Evil	9	Adventure	UbiSoft
79	Hol-03	Bionicle	6	Action	EA/Lego

Iss.	Month	Game Name	Score	Genre	Publisher
79	Hol-03	Bloody Roar 4	6	Fighting	Konami/Hudson
79	Hol-03	Conflict: Desert Storm II	7	Action	Gotham
79	Hol-03	Crash Nitro Kart	8	Racing	Vivendi
79	Hol-03	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	7	Fighting	Atari
79	Hol-03	Dynasty Warriors 4 XL	8	Fighting	Koei
79	Hol-03	ESPN College Hoops	8	Sports	Sega
79	Hol-03	Gladiator: Sword Of Vengeance	8	Fighting	Acclaim
79	Hol-03	Goblin Commander	6	Action	Jaleco
79	Hol-03	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	7	Sports	EA Games
79	Hol-03	The Haunted Mansion	8	Adventure	TDK Interactive
79	Hol-03	I-Ninja	7	Action	Namco
79	Hol-03	Kya: Dark Lineage	9	Action	Atari
79	Hol-03	Lord Of The Rings: ROTK	8	Action	EA
79	Hol-03	March Madness 2004	9	Sports	EA Sports
79	Hol-03	Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun	9	FPS	EA Games
79	Hol-03	Midway Arcade Treasures	7	Arcade	Midway
79	Hol-03	Monster Rancher 4	8	Fighting	Tecmo
79	Hol-03	NBA Shootout 2004	6	Sports	Sony
79	Hol-03	NCAA Final Four 2004	6	Sports	Sony
79	Hol-03	Need For Speed Underground	8	Racing	EA
79	Hol-03	Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time	8	Adventure	UbiSoft
79	Hol-03	RPG Maker 2	8	RPG	Agetec
79	Hol-03	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	8	Air Combat	LucasArts
79	Hol-03	Sphinx And The Cursed Mummy	8	Action	THQ
79	Hol-03	Tak And The Power Of Juju	7	Action	THQ
79	Hol-03	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	5	Action	Konami
79	Hol-03	XIII	7	Action	UbiSoft
78	Dec-03	Batman: Rise Of Sin Tzu	6	Action	UbiSoft
78	Dec-03	Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence	9	Action	Konami
78	Dec-03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	7	Fighting	UbiSoft
78	Dec-03	ESPN NBA Basketball	9	Sports	Sega
78	Dec-03	FIFA Soccer 2004	8	Sports	EA
78	Dec-03	Gladius	8	Action/RPG	LucasArts
78	Dec-03	Karaoke Revolution	8	Music	Konami
78	Dec-03	kill.switch	6	Shooter	Namco
78	Dec-03	Metal Arms: GITS	8	Action	Vivendi
78	Dec-03	NBA Jam 2004	6	Sports	Acclaim
78	Dec-03	NBA Live 2004	8	Sports	EA Sports
78	Dec-03	Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	10	Action	Sony CEA
78	Dec-03	Roadkill	7	Car Combat	Midway
78	Dec-03	Rogue Ops	6	Action	Kemco
78	Dec-03	SSX 3	10	Racing	EA Sports Big
78	Dec-03	Swat: Global Stike Force	8	Action	Vivendi
78	Dec-03	Time Crisis 3	9	Shooter	Namco
78	Dec-03	WWE SmackDown! HCTP	9	Wrestling	THQ
78	Dec-03	Warhammer 40,000: FW	9	FPS	THQ
78	Dec-03	XGRA	6	Racing	Acclaim
77	Nov-03	Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	6	Shooter	Activision

HIGH SCORES

These are the games that you've GOT to get your hands on!

Iss.	Month	Game name	Score	Genre	Publisher
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ratchet & Clank: [illegible]	10	Action	Sony CEA
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	10	[illegible]	[illegible]
77	Nov-03	Jak II	10	Action	Sony CEA
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
75	Sep-03	NCAA 2004	10	Sports	EA Sports
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
72	June-03	Midnight Club II	10	Racing	Rockstar
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
52	Dec-01	MGS 2: Sons Of Liberty	10	Action	Konami
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] XS pro Skater 3 (PS2)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
51	Nov-01	Devil May Cry	10	Action	Capcom
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
47	July-01	Gran Turismo 3	10	Racing	Sony CEA
39	Nov-00	SSX (PS2)	10	Racing	Sony CEA
82	Mar-04	Champions Of Norrath	9	Action/RPG	Sony Online

Iss.	Month	Game name	Score	Genre	Publisher
82	Mar-04	NFL Street	9	Sports	EA
82	Mar-04	[illegible]	9	Sports	Konami
81	Feb-04	Final Fantasy X-2	9	RPG	Square Enix
81	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	Action	[illegible]
80	Jan-04	Tony Hawk's Underground	9	Sports	Activision
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	Adventure	[illegible]
79	Hol-03	Kya: dark Lineage	9	Action	Atari
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	Sports	EA Sports
79	Hol-03	Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun	9	FPS	EA Games
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	Action	[illegible]
78	Dec-03	ESPN NBA Basketball	9	Sports	Sega
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	Shooter	Namco
78	Dec-03	WWE SmackDown! HCTP	9	Wrestling	THQ
78	Dec-03	Warhammer 40,000: FW	9	FPS	THQ
77	Nov-03	DDRMax 2	9	Dancing	Konami

A cunning mind. A killer body.

Nightshade

Go ahead, test her. But be warned. Beneath that sweet exterior is a hardened assassin. From vivid urban warfare to unlimited kill combos, the ultimate Ninja experience has arrived.

MATURE 17+
M
Blood
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation.2

SEGA
sega.com/usa

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NINTENDO GAMECUBE

XBOX LIVE

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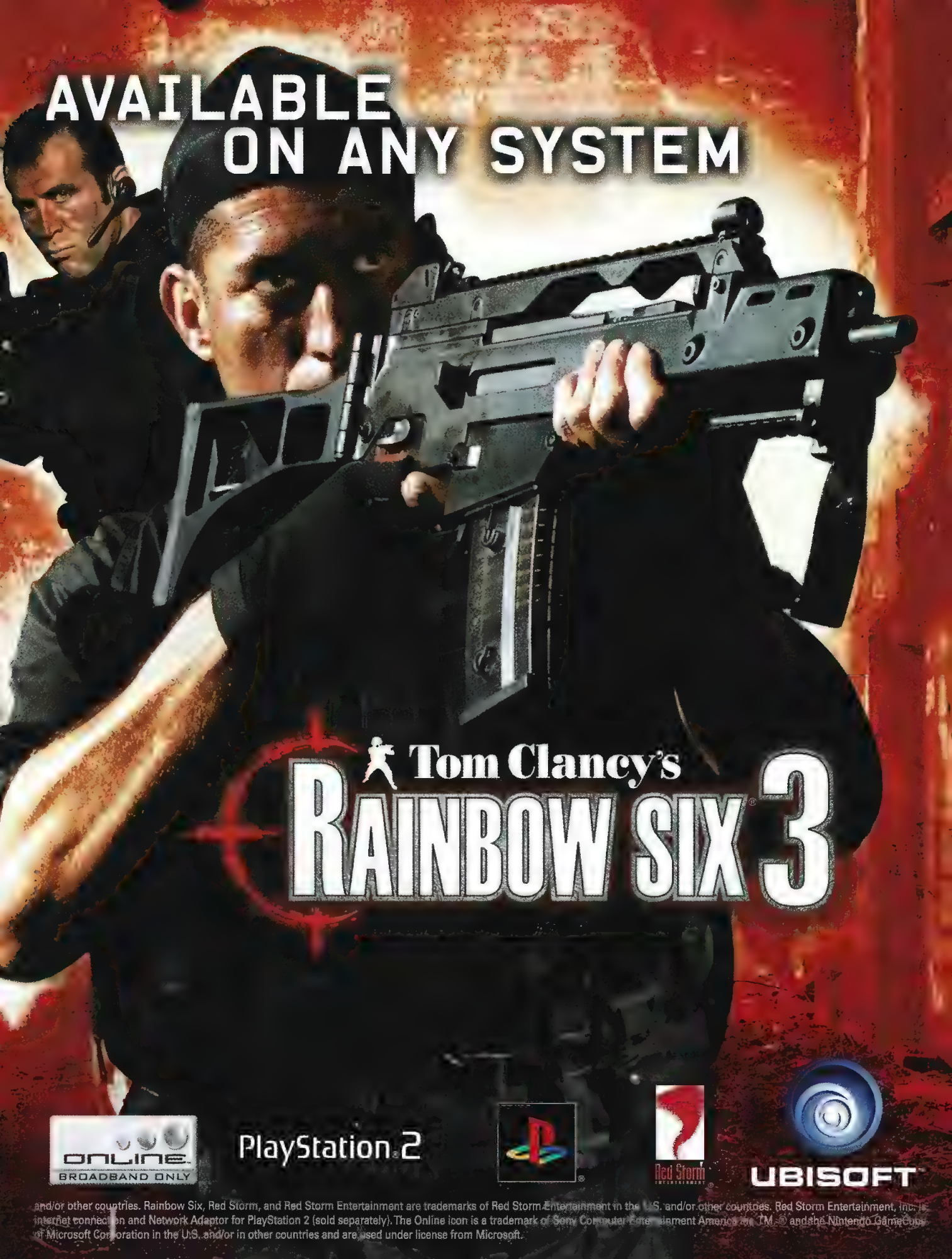

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PSM ALL-TIME BEST PLAYSTATION SERIES

Creating a truly great game is a monumental task. Following it up with a great sequel is even more difficult. Establishing a dominant franchise built on a series of great games — well, that's just about impossible. However, the PlayStation consoles have been the home of an abnormally large number of game series that just get better and better. More than any individual titles on their own, these franchises helped make the PlayStation and PS2 the most dominant consoles of their time. Here are our top picks for the 10 best PlayStation game franchises of all time.

10. The Arcade Racing Legend

RIDGE RACER

The Games: Ridge Racer, Ridge Racer Revolution, Rage Racer, R4: Ridge Racer Type 4, Ridge Racer V

Before *Gran Turismo*, the PlayStation racing world was dominated by *Ridge Racer*. The series, famous for its graphics and power-slide controls, nicely showed off the power of Sony's console and became a smash hit for Namco. Sequels quickly followed, and the best of them, *Ridge Racer Type 4*, borrowed simulation and collecting aspects from *Gran Turismo* to create a brilliant merger of two types of racing gameplay.

Ridge Racer V for the PlayStation 2, the best looking game in the series, came out of the gate a little flat. This was likely a product of a shortened development cycle aimed at getting the game in stores by the launch of the PS2. Another lackluster PS2 racer, *R: Racing Evolution*, was created by Namco, but it's not really part of the *Ridge Racer* series, so you really can't count this one against them.

High Point: *Ridge Racer Type 4* was everything we had hoped this series could be; let's hope it gets back there some day.

Low Point: *Ridge Racer V* was rushed out the door to meet the Japanese PS2 launch, but we were still hoping for something a little sharper out of this series.

PSM Score Chart:
Ridge Racer: 10
Ridge Racer Revolution: 10
Rage Racer: 10
R4: 10 Ridge Racer V: 7

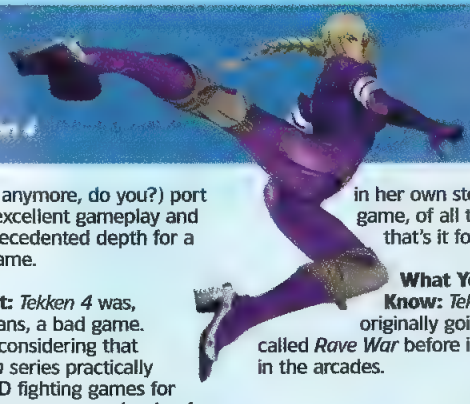
The Future: We know for fact that Namco is working on a new, true *Ridge Racer* game for PS2, but it's still too early to talk specifics.

What You Didn't Know: The *Galaxian* loading screen game in *Ridge Racer 1* isn't just for looks. If you are able to destroy all of the Galaxians, you will earn eight extra cars in the game.

9. The Fight Club

TEKKEN

The Games: Tekken, Tekken 2, Tekken 3, Tekken Tag, Tekken 4



In 1994, Namco introduced the world to *Tekken*, a fighting game with then-novel polygonal graphics. The game ran on System 11, a graphics board developed in cooperation with Sony, so a translation over to Sony's new PlayStation within months of its launch was a natural. The game was a blockbuster from the very start. With its lighting fast play, intuitive control and cutting edge graphics, *Tekken* quickly established itself as the powerhouse fighting franchise in the videogame world. Two top-selling sequels further established its dominance.

The transition to the PS2 was as smooth as silk, with *Tekken Tag Tournament*. While this game wasn't as deep as Namco's *Soul Calibur*, the gameplay was still razor sharp and a new generation of gamers found out what all the fuss was about. Once again, *Tekken* established itself as the biggest name in fighting games — a title it's not about to relinquish in the near future.

High Point: *Tekken 3* was about as perfect as a fighting game could get at its time. This near arcade-perfect (you really don't hear that term anymore, do you?) port featured excellent gameplay and then unprecedented depth for a fighting game.

Low Point: *Tekken 4* was, by no means, a bad game. However, considering that the *Tekken* series practically defined 3D fighting games for many gamers, we were hoping for a little more innovation.

The Future: Things have been strangely silent on the *Tekken* front. Nina Williams, one of the series' best-loved characters, is set to star in her own stealth/action game, of all things, but that's it for now.

What You Didn't Know: *Tekken* was originally going to be called *Rave War* before it debuted in the arcades.

PSM Score Chart:
Tekken: 10 Tekken 2: 10
Tekken 3: 10 Tekken Tag: 8
Tekken 4: 8

Just Missed The Cut

The PlayStation consoles have been the home of a number of great game series, here are a few that made the list for honorable mention:

TWISTED METAL SERIES
Bigger in the PlayStation days, but *Twisted Metal Black* was a solid addition to this legendary series

LEGACY OF KAIN / BLOOD OMEN SERIES
This franchise has been consistently good since the days of the PlayStation. Although it isn't quite in the same league as the top games on this list, it's still a solid series.

CASTLEVANIA SERIES
The *Castlevania* series has brought us some fantastic games, but there just wasn't enough of the good ones to make the list.

CAPCOM 2D FIGHTER SERIES
The *Street Fighter* series reached its peak on the PlayStation, but 2D gaming done right still has a home even on a powerhouse like the PlayStation 2.

CRASH BANDICOOT SERIES
The games developed by Naughty Dog are among the most playable platformers ever made. Unfortunately, the series has lost some steam on the PlayStation 2.

8. The King of Extreme

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

The Games: Tony Hawk 1-4 and Tony Hawk's Underground

When we first played *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* in 1999, it took us about five minutes to realize that it was something special. We were hooked by a fierce addiction that still hasn't let go. Little did we realize the impact that this game would have across the entire videogame world. The sheer number of titles that copied the *Tony Hawk* gameplay is staggering, but through it all, Neversoft just kept making its game better and better.

Each year the developer would introduce a new *Tony Hawk* feature or gameplay tweak that radically revolutionized the game. The very next year, everyone would copy it. However, they never caught up. *Tony Hawk* just kept adding new goodies and made the leap from the PlayStation to the PlayStation 2 with unexpected grace, even adding online play for good measure. The series recently expanded with a touch of *GTA III* thrown into the latest edition, known as *Tony Hawk's Underground*. This garnered the series its first PSM non-perfect score, but regardless, it's still an excellent game, carrying on the tradition of a great franchise.

High Point: *Tony Hawk 4* is the game that put it all together the best, but we'll always have a soft spot in our hearts for the original, which caught us by surprise and never let us go.

Low Point: This franchise really doesn't have a low point; it's been great from day one, which is an exceptional rarity in the videogame biz.

The Future: Is there any doubt that Neversoft is already well into development on the next *Tony Hawk?* After seeing the ambition level they had for *THUG*, we can't wait to see what they dream up next.

What You Didn't Know: At one point early in this series, Tony Hawk and Activision were locked into negotiations so intense that it's been rumored that Activision looked into continuing the *"Pro Skater"* series without the skating megastar's name.

PSM Score Chart:
TH: 10 TH2: 10 TH3: 10
TH4: 10 THUG: 9

7. The Downhill Dominator

SSX

The Games: SSX, SSX Tricky, SSX 3

When *SSX* hit the PS2 in 2000, snowboarding games still hadn't gotten things right. Nintendo's *1080* was excellent, but new blood was definitely needed. *SSX* came in and rocked the sport with a brash new perspective on the sport. Sure, the game's moves and big air jumps were ridiculous at times, but it didn't matter; the control and tricks were so fantastic that nobody cared. The *Tricky* follow-up was more like an expansion pack than a true sequel, but it was still great fun and the best was yet to come.

SSX 3 was the true sequel we all had been waiting for. The controls were even tighter, the big air was bigger, the tricks were trickier and the level design was dead solid perfect. As a whole, this series maintained a high level of consistency and managed to improve the few areas that needed improvement. This franchise has become so enjoyable and so addictive it probably should only be sold on dimly lit street corners.

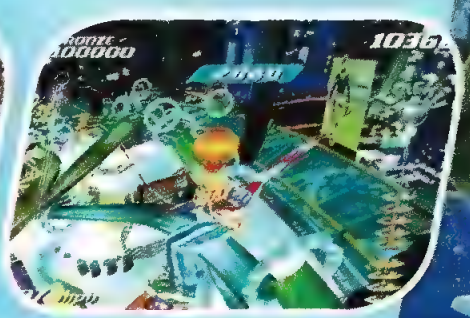
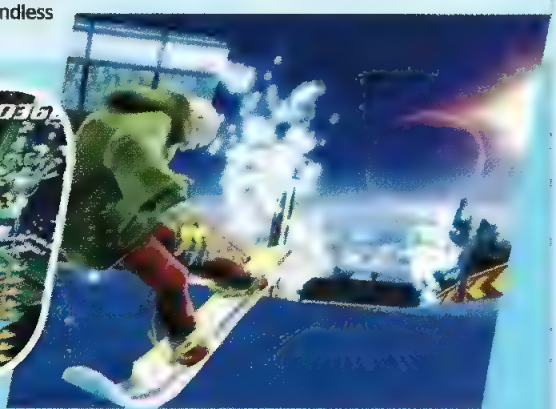
PSM Score Chart:
SSX: 10 Tricky: 9 SSX 3: 10

High Point: *SSX 3* is as good as snowboarding gets. Countless special items, challenges, secret shortcuts and gameplay goals add up to endless hours of gameplay.

Low Point: *SSX Tricky* was the only slight dip in this series. It seemed like the celebrity-voiced "wacky" characters demanded the lion's share of the developer's focus. Thank goodness that direction was abandoned before *SSX 3*.

The Future: Hey, we're still playing *SSX 3* — come back when we're finished!

What You Didn't Know: Celebrity voices for the characters in Tricky included Billy Zane, Lucy Liu, Oliver Platt, Macy Gray, and David Arquette.

6. The Heart Stopper

RESIDENT EVIL

The Games: Resident Evil, Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil 3, Code Veronica, Resident Evil Dead Aim

You know you're doing something right when you create an entire genre. When *Resident Evil (BioHazard* in Japan) hit the PlayStation in 1996, it instantly defined the look, feel and rules of the survival horror genre. The sheer number of copycats is a testament to the impact of this game. It was dark, exhilarating and, at times, genuinely frightening. A few memorable scenes in this series are as terrifying as anything ever shown on a movie screen.

After two excellent PlayStation follow-ups, the series made the jump to the PS2 (following an extremely short "exclusive" tenure on the GameCube) with *Code: Veronica X*. Although this was an update of a Sega Dreamcast original, it became immediately apparent that *Resident Evil* was most at home on Sony's machines. A forgettable shooter called *Resident Evil: Dead Aim* followed, but it's just a gap filler for the upcoming multiplayer mayhem in *Resident Evil: Outbreak*.

High Point: *Resident Evil 2* is considered to be the pinnacle game in this franchise. Just about as many gamers consider it the best Survival Horror game of all time.

PSM Score Chart:
RE: 10 RE2: 10 RE3: 8
Code Veronica: 9 Dead Aim: 5

Low Point: The dialogue and voice acting in the original *Resident Evil* was nothing short of awful... but some gamers liked it that way.

The Future: The online multiplayer *Resident Evil Outbreak* enables players to work together to fight off zombie hordes — while trying not to become one of the undead themselves.

What You Didn't Know: *Resident Evil: Director's Cut* wasn't actually the complete director's cut. A copyright misunderstanding between Capcom's U.S. and Japanese division resulted in the uncensored Japanese cinemas getting left on the cutting room floor for a second time.

5. The Grizzled Vet

METAL GEAR SOLID

The Games: Metal Gear Solid, Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance

The *Metal Gear* series debuted in North America on the NES in 1988. Its stealth gameplay, storytelling structure, innovative gadgets and overall design were years ahead of their time. The summer after the PlayStation debuted, gamers got their first glimpse of how the series had progressed and we were way beyond impressed. *Metal Gear Solid* instantly became one of the most anticipated and eagerly awaited videogames in history. When it finally arrived in 1998, the final product actually exceeded even those lofty expectations.

We had to wait until the PlayStation2 arrived to get our shot at a true *Metal Gear Solid* sequel. *Sons of Liberty* was the first title to open the world's eyes to what the PS2 was capable of, and once again, we were beyond impressed. As before, the gameplay more than lived up to the hype. With these two *Metal Gear* titles in place, *Metal Gear Solid* has become one of the premiere franchises in all of gaming.

High Point: The original *Metal Gear Solid* for the PlayStation is still the pinnacle of this series. It's brilliant design and outlandish gameplay concepts makes this an unforgettably great game.

Low Point: Raiden replaces Solid Snake in *Sons of Liberty*. This character hits rock bottom while doing cartwheels in the nude near the end of the game.

The Future: *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* is being touted as a potential game of the year candidate, and no one's even played it yet! One thing's for certain: this *MGS's* survival-based gameplay will be a big departure for the series.

What you didn't know *Metal Gear* didn't debut on the NES. In 1987, it launched in Europe and Japan on a gaming system called the MSX.

PSM Score Chart:
MGS: 10 VR Missions: 7
MGS2: 10 MGS2-S: 9

Lost In Transition

Some of the biggest PlayStation series didn't make a great transition to the PS2. Others didn't make the transition at all. It's a shame, too; we would love to see these franchises at their peak on our PlayStation 2.

COLONY WARS
This franchise innovated some of the best special effects ever seen on the PlayStation. Imagine what it could have done with today's hardware.

WIPEOUT
The series that practically defined the style of the PlayStation hardly raised a blip on PS2 radar screens.

TOMB RAIDER
With all the hype, big budget movies and Lara Croft models, someone forgot about a little thing we like to call gameplay.

FEAR EFFECT
Fear Effect had it all — solid graphics, good storytelling, enjoyable adventure gameplay and some sexy lead characters. Seems like a perfect fit for the PlayStation 2.

NFL GAMEDAY
At one time, 989 Sports actually had *Madden* beat. Now its football series is slowly climbing out of the hole created when it became the laughing stock of the PS2 sports world.

4. The Dynasty

MADDEN FOOTBALL

The Games: Madden '97—'04

Madden Football debuted in 1990 on the Sega Genesis. The series almost single-handedly launched Sega's console plans into the stratosphere. Its debut on the PlayStation was a little rockier. The first game scheduled for the PlayStation was *Madden 96*, but somewhere in the transition between sprite-based and polygonal graphics, the game lost the plot and was canceled. Subsequent editions were hit or miss, as EA honed its skills at 3D sports. By 2000, *Madden* was back in dominant form, and it wouldn't be caught from that point on.

On the PlayStation 2, the *Madden* franchise was so consistently amazing that it was almost disheartening for the rest of the industry. Despite (or perhaps because of) intense, quality competition from Sega, EA managed to vastly improve its game year upon year. Each new edition introduced brilliant new features and held onto the old ones. The depth of *Madden Football* at this stage is staggering. Its developer, Tiburon, deserves endless credit for pushing the series to improve year after year. Because of this relentless drive, *Madden* has become the very model of consistent brilliance.

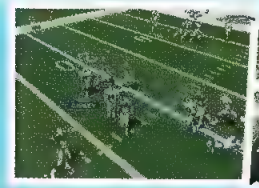
High Point: *Madden 2004* is so deep, thanks to an Owners' Mode, the highly enjoyable Mini Camp Mode, Two Minute Drills, Madden Challenges, online play and... screw it, there's too much to write about. This game's just plain freaky deep.

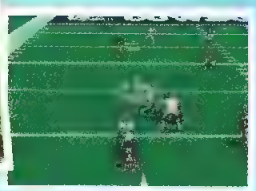
Low Point: *Madden '96* was the only version of the franchise that has ever been canceled during development.

The Future: EA doesn't talk about football games this early in the development cycle, but here's a safe bet. It's going to be deeper, prettier and better than last year. Any takers?

What You Didn't Know: We actually played the legendary *Madden '96* on a preview copy that floated through our offices before this magazine was in existence. In case you wondered, EA made the right choice canceling this title.

PSM Score Chart:
98: 6 99: 8 2000: 10 '01: 10
'02: 10 '03: 10 '04: 10





Tomorrow's Dynasties?

The PlayStation 2 has spawned some exciting new series since its launch. Here are the ones we think have the best shot at making it through the long haul.

NCAA FOOTBALL
Although it's always been in the shadow of *Madden*, *NCAA Football* has become a force on its own in the last few years. Sports junkies have a hard time choosing between the two.

RATCHET & CLANK
Mixing platform gameplay with gadget-based good times is a perfect fit. *Ratchet and Clank* could be around for a long, long time.

JAK AND DAXTER
Naughty Dog has another winner on its hands. This franchise's huge worlds and tight gameplay make it a series we wouldn't mind returning to.

TIMESPLITTERS
This first person shooter series is a joy to play head to head on split screen. It is the PS2 shooter best prepared for the inevitable transition towards online play.

KINGDOM HEARTS
One game does not make a franchise, but with *Kingdom Hearts II* on its way, Square could have another franchise as deep, approachable and entertaining as *Final Fantasy*.

3. The Kingpin of Crime

GRAND THEFT AUTO

The Games: GTA, GTA London 1969, GTA2, GTA3, GTA 3: VC

Grand Theft Auto debuted on the PC in 1997, to average and unexcited reviews. This violent, Mature-rated game offered the same open-ended gameplay, clever use of radio and hard edged content as the mega-blockbuster *Grand Theft Auto III*, but it did it all from a 2D top down perspective. It may not have caught the eyes of the videogame press, but the games became a hit on the PlayStation, especially in Europe. The game did so well, in fact, Rockstar Games was practically founded around it, and under this new banner, *GTA: London* hit the PlayStation. However, *Grand Theft Auto* didn't reach full stride until it arrived on the PS2.

Grand Theft Auto III scrawled the franchise's name across the PS2. It is by far the best selling title on the system and, together with *Vice City*, the PS2 versions have sold well over 25 million units worldwide. The unabashedly brutal game updated the original's 2D graphics with a slick polygonal engine and a huge city for players do to absolutely whatever they want. The gameplay and content found a resonance with both hardcore gamers and the mass market. The franchise has already been widely copied and has considerably impacted the future of videogames. When people look back at the PS2, this will be the franchise that most clearly defined it.

High Point: *GTA III: Vice City* takes the franchise concept to new levels. Plus, it brought back some 80's classics we had forgotten. Great style, brilliant voice acting, unparallel depth and countless hours of gameplay make this the model for continuing a great franchise.

Low Point: Considering some of the games that have already tried to copy gameplay and stylistic elements from *GTA III*, we hate to think what kind of copycat crap this series may dredge up in the future.

The Future: Rockstar North is definitely working on a new *GTA* game for PS2, due out by the end of the year. Exactly when and where it will be set, however, is still a mystery — such locales as "San Andreas" and "Sin City" have been bandied about in recent months.

What You Didn't Know: The original *GTA* stayed on the top 20 videogame charts in the U.K. for two solid years. The Brits beat us to this one.

PSM Score Chart:
GTA: 6 GTA London 1969: 6
GTA2: 6 GTA3: 9 GTAVC: 9

2. The Ultimate Simulation

GRAN TURISMO

The Games: Gran Turismo, Gran Turismo 2, Gran Turismo 3

In 1998, *Gran Turismo* changed the way driving games were made. Before it hit the PlayStation, realism in racing games was... well, not very real. *Gran Turismo* revolutionized the genre by adding more than 200 real vehicles, obsessively deep gameplay, mind boggling replays and the coolest driving physics the gaming world had ever seen. Before long, almost every driving series in the business cribbed elements from this title, and with good reason — *Turismo* was absolutely brilliant. An excellent sequel followed on the PlayStation, but this one added 300 more new cars for a total of more than 500(!!!) vehicles you could earn.

By the time *Gran Turismo 3 A-spec* reached the PlayStation2, the series had firmly established itself as videogaming's premier racing simulation. The series' graphics, simulation and depth all got a serious boost on Sony's new hardware and, except for the fact that there were far fewer cars than in *GT2*, the game was better than ever. The only complaint we could make is that the developer Polyphony takes its sweet time making these games. The results are fantastic, but the wait is excruciating.

High Point: Each of these games has been brilliant, but we'll pick the original, because its design was so innovative and fresh for the time.

Low Point: The original release of *Gran Turismo 2* was plagued with bugs. Sony eventually fixed the problems with future shipments of the game, but early adopters got hosed.

The Future: *Gran Turismo 4* will feature more than 500 real cars, online play, a drop dead gorgeous graphics engine that squeezes every last polygon out of the PS2, and an even better driving simulation engine. The best just keeps getting better.

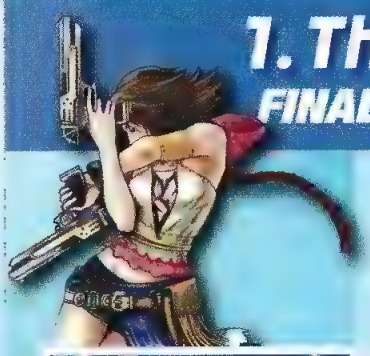
What You Didn't Know *Gran Turismo 3* was originally going to have more than 500 cars, but Polyphony had to sacrifice those plans to get the game out on time.

PSM Score Chart:
GT: 10 GT2: 10 GT3: 10

1. The Storyteller

FINAL FANTASY

The Games: FFVII, FFVIII, FFIX, FFX, FFX-2, FF Tactics, FF Chronicles, FF Anthology



In October 1990, SquareSoft stormed the RPG world with the first *Final Fantasy*. The franchise quickly grew to become the most revered and most popular role-playing franchises in videogame history. By the time *Final Fantasy VII* hit the PlayStation in 1997, the series had advanced into perhaps the biggest game franchise on Earth. Many credit Square's commitment to make games exclusively for the PlayStation as a key factor in the console's runaway success. The future of RPGs, and games in general, was at our doorstep. The world finally got to see Square's fantastic storytelling working together with gorgeous graphics and well-honed gameplay. What more could you ask for?

In subsequent years, Square produced two more *Final Fantasy* games on the PlayStation and then upped the ante on the PlayStation2 with the utterly gorgeous *FFX*. By this time, the franchise had become a cultural icon and had firmly rooted itself as one of the PlayStation's greatest draws and helped established the "cool factor" that rocketed the PSone and PS2 to the uncontested lead in the videogame wars.

High Point: Even though today's graphics may look prettier, no single story line captured the hearts of gamers like the story in *FF VII*. Let's just say gamers actually shed tears at the death of a certain main character. Let's see *Pac-Man* do that.

Low Point: The *Final Fantasy: the Spirits Within* computer-animated movie tanked... and tanked hard at the box office. The movie grossed an estimated $100 million below its production cost in the U.S.

The Future: It's all about *FFXI*. This is the game that could push the PS2 broadband adapter and HDD into the mainstream stratosphere. This massively multiplayer online RPG is already a hit in Japan — it should be even bigger here.

What You Didn't Know: Fledgling developer Squaresoft was near bankruptcy when it released the first *Final Fantasy* game. Fourteen years and more than 45 million units sold later, they're doing quite nicely.

PSM Score Chart:
FFVII: 10 FFVIII: 8 FFIX: 10
FFX: 10 FFX-2: 9 FF Tactics: 8
FF Chronicles: 7 FF Anthology: 8

THE DRIVER

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MOR

ONLY IN PSM FIRST LOOK

TAL KOMBAT

DECEPTION

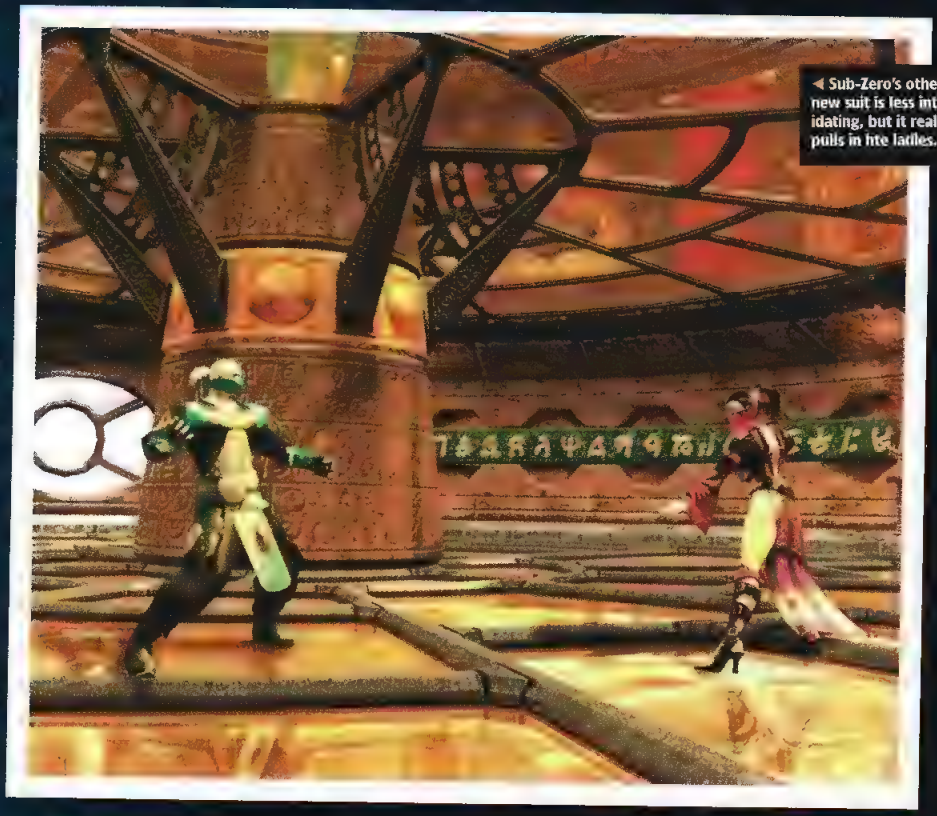
Your WORLD EXCLUSIVE first look at the biggest, baddest MK ever starts NOW!

Deep within Midway's top-secret Chicago studio, behind doors locked tight by keypad codes, *Mortal Kombat* co-creator Ed Boon and his team plan day and night to do just one thing: kick your ass.

Their weapon of ass-destruction? *Mortal Kombat: Deception*, the follow up to 2002's insanely popular *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*. When PSM caught wind of Boon's devious plan, we booked the next flight to Chicago for the world-exclusive first look at the game. Once at MK HQ, we kept both cheeks covered as Boon led us into the building, past security, through the guard doors and over the scorpion pits. Upon seeing the game in action, though, our defenses could do nothing to protect our posteriors from the mighty boot of *Mortal Kombat: Deception*.

Deception is everything you loved about *Deadly Alliance* taken even closer to the edge, and then pushed over. Boon's team, determined not to simply rest on the last game's success, has cooked up wild new ideas that even the most hardcore *MK* fans won't expect: multi-tiered battle arenas... death traps and background weapons... an overhauled Konquest mode... more Fatalities... new and returning characters... a *Mortal Kombat* strategy board game and puzzle game... and everything's playable online.

Hurts to sit now, doesn't it? ▶



◀ Sub-Zero's other new suit is less intimidating, but it really pulls in hte ladies.

FIGHT!

Boon and his team completely overhauled the fighting system for *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*, and they (like the fans) were very satisfied with the results. It should come as no surprise that every new addition from the last game, such as the multiple fighting styles per character, will stick around for *Deception*. The question now is, aside from tweaking each character's move sets, how does the team plan to take make the action dramatically better than before?

The answer doesn't lie in the characters, but in the environments. From what we've seen and played, *Deception's* battle arenas should be the most interactive stages ever seen in a fighting game. We're talkin' major league upgrades, here.

First off, the levels are simply *huge*. The stages are multi-tiered, offering several floors of beat-'em-up space. Imagine the multi-leveled battlefields of the *Dead or Alive* series, but with more imagination and interaction. Sometimes you'll simply knock a guy off a ledge for a 50-foot drop, and other times you'll wage war floor by floor until you reach certain death at the bottom. Each arena has its own unique ways to go between levels, and players will be challenged to take full advantage of this feature.

Background weapons are another new addition. These rare items are unique to the level they appear on, and are much more powerful than the standard weapons carried by the kombatants. Each weapon has its own set of moves, and as long as it's being held, those are the only moves a character will perform. Switch styles, or get knocked to the ground, and you'll drop the weapon, giving your opponent a chance to snatch it. Advantageous items like these are always marked by the color green, while dangerous areas are marked with red. What dangers can a level pose? Two words for you: death traps. ▶

BACKGROUND WEAPONS

▲ Scorpion slips past Hotaru to grab Beetle Lair's background weapon — *run*, Hotaru! ▼ What's Hotaru waiting for? That thing's got giant *spikes* on it, man! For the love of — *ah*, forget it. Get whacked, what do we care.

BACK IN THE GAME

Alongside the new kombatants, old *MK* favorites will return to join the fray. While the full list of characters is yet to be revealed, these screens show some familiar faces in action.

Sindel and Mileena return, ready to give fans the ultimate "katfight."

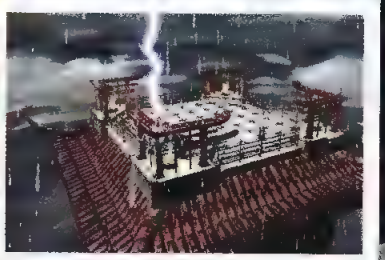
Legendary secret character Ermac is back, and so is fan-favorite Baraka.

We're pretty sure that's Night Wolf going for the background weapon vs. newcomer Hotaru.

◀ Before any "Raiden's a girl!" rumors get started, we should tell you that the lady in this pic is named Ashrah. Her connection to Raiden, if any, remains a closely-guarded secret for now.

◀ That red pane of glass is a death trap — whoever gets knocked into it will be eaten alive by thousands of nasty little insects.

▼ The new levels, like Sky Temple (shown here), have incredible lighting and weather effects.



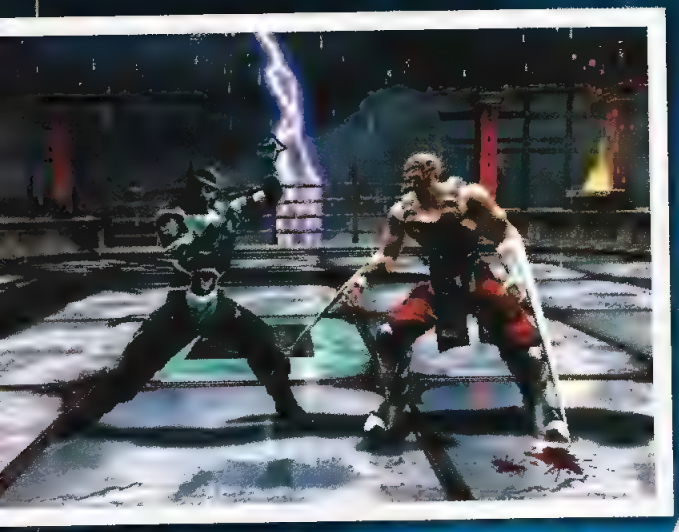
▲ The crazy juggle combos from *MK: Deadly Alliance* are back in full force... much to Mileena's dismay.

▼ Knocking a guy off a cliff, through a wall, etc. inflicts *major* damage.

▲ Kenshi, still blind, is back to take even more punishment. You've gotta give the guy credit, though — he takes a kick to the groin as good as anybody.

▶ Death traps are, by far, one of the coolest new additions, and are sure to have *MK* fanatics giggling with perverted glee. Once knocked into a death trap, there's no coming back — think of it as a "stage fatality." One grotesque example is the meat grinder in the Slaughterhouse stage. Kick a guy into it, and... you get the idea. There are also lesser dangers to keep an eye out for, such as flames, that will only do minor damage. Sometimes the level designers are especially evil and will place a powerful background weapon right in front of a death trap, which can lead to great mind games in versus competition.

Let's see, other tidbits about the fighting... obviously, new Kombatants will be introduced (what's with the girl dressed like Raiden?). You'll still earn koins to spend on goodies in the Krypt, and each character will go back to having multiple fatalities. We've even heard word of new "hari kari" moves; self-inflicted fatalities that you can perform to deny your opponent the satisfaction of killing you. Once the words "Finish Him!" appear, it will be a race to see who's got the fastest fingers.



▲ Lightning, fire, rain, reflections — is this game drop-dead gorgeous, or what? And how freakin' cool is it to have Baraka back in da house? We love that ugly guy.

▲ The levels are larger with more detail than ever, and the characters still look just as good (if not better).

◀ Longtime fans will be pleased to know that Noob Saibot is back in action.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Here's the dreaded Slaughterhouse death trap in all its gory glory. In the first screen, a background weapon once stood inside the green square, tempting the players dangerously close to the red hazard area...

◀ Phoenix Rathbone wearing the most revealing *MK* costume ever, not that we mind... (just don't look under the veil!).

A LONG DROP

The sky temple is one of the tallest multi-tiered levels, and depending on which side you start to fall down, you can end up in different areas, each holding its own unique dangers.

KONQUEST

Fans of *Deadly Alliance* know that the Konquest mode is really what it's all about. You can spend weeks working through it, learning the ins and outs of every character while unlocking cool stuff. The good news is that the Konquest mode is back and is great for all the same reasons, and the better news is that it's now oh-so-much more.

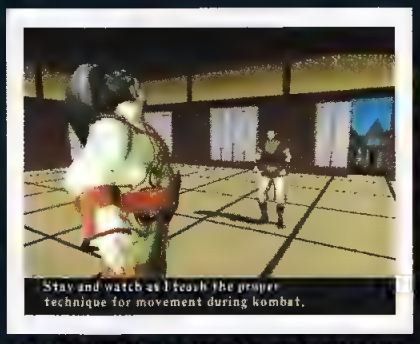
The focus is still on learning each character's every move and combo with the help of instructors like Bo' Rai Cho, but now there's a whole world of coolness to explore, too. Picture this: you're in a large village surrounded by people packing the streets, with various buildings waiting for you to explore them. You enter a nearby dojo and Bo' Rai Cho is there, ready to teach you new techniques. After a quick lesson, you leave and walk down the street, occasionally punching a random villager to the ground *Grand Theft Auto*-style, just because. You're walking past an alleyway when you spot Scorpion out of the corner of your eye, standing in the shadows behind some crates. You approach him, and a secret technique is your reward.

Konquest is a full adventure game and training mode in one, and it could be the single best reason to buy this game. Certain characters will only appear, and certain events will only take place, at specific times of day. Boon's team promises tons of secrets built around this feature, bringing a lot of the old-school mystique back to *Mortal Kombat*. In fact, there will be so much stuff to discover that, even in this age of faqs and the internet, some secrets should remain hidden for a long time. Because "waiting for 2:00 to come around" can quickly become a bore in some games, players will have the ability to meditate. While your character sits still in a zen-like state, the rest of the village will buzz around him at super speed as the sun races across the sky. So, when your buddy tells you that he saw Sub Zero wandering around the dojo at 5:45, you can load up your game and look for him yourself without a lot of waiting around. Oh, speaking of character cameos, every single *Mortal Kombat* character that's ever appeared in any *MK* game will make an appearance in Konquest mode. That's just damn cool.

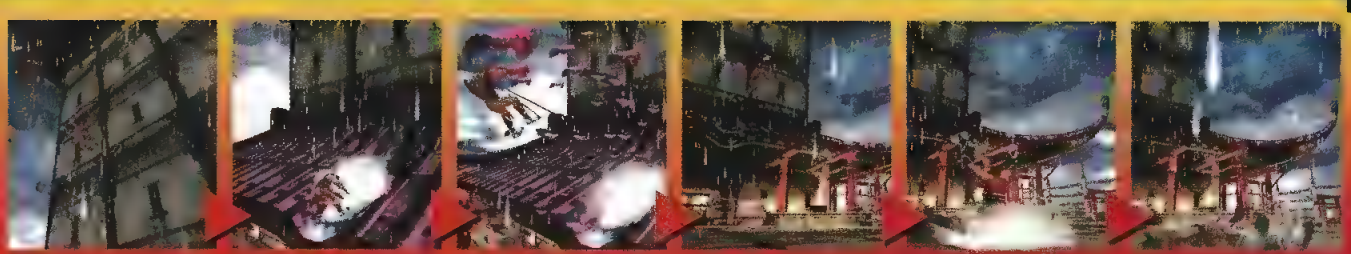
One last note about Konquest — while you'll start as a fairly generic monk-like character, you'll build him into your own unique fighting masterpiece. Once you've mastered other kombatants' techniques, you'll have the ability to add them to your own arsenal, and you can learn secret new moves, too. Once you've beaten Konquest mode, you'll be able to play your custom character in every other game mode, even online! You can further customize your fighter with decorative items, and he will age as you go through Konquest, so everyone's character should look fairly unique.

▲ As your character spends days, even years (in game time) exploring his surroundings, he'll uncover countless secrets. By the time you finish Konquest, you'll have your own custom "master" character to compete with.

▲ Like many of *Deception's* different modes, Konquest could legitimately be a full game on its own.



▲ While adventuring is a ton of fun, you've got to keep hitting the dojo to improve your fighting skills.



THE NETHER

Just based on the name alone, this level is already one of our early favorites. Even better, though, is that it's a great example of just how interactive the new battle arenas are going to be. In this one stage, we've got multiple floors, people trying to grab you from the sides, crazy swinging corpses and more. Let's take a closer look...

◀ The inside of this massive ship looks incredible, with plenty of realistic detail and stunning lighting effects. You really have to see this thing in motion to get the full impact. Hey, hardcore *MK* fans — recognize this ship?

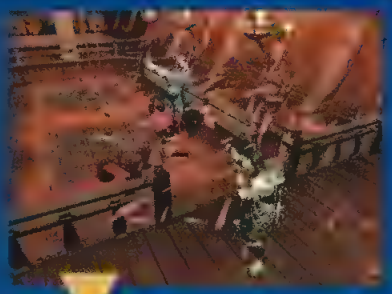
▼ As this concept art shows, you won't want to get too close to the sides — there are people down there with pointy teeth that will grab hold of you and do a bit of damage.

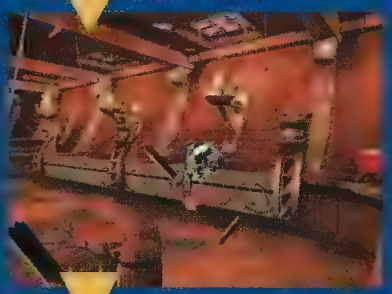
LOWER LEVEL FIGHTING SECTION

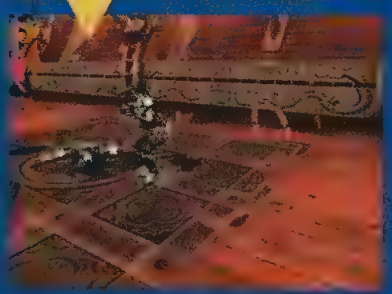
BELLY

LOOK OUT BELOW!

This sequence shows a glimpse of the level above the ship's main area. Just smash your opponent through the wooden railing, then jump down and continue the bashing!

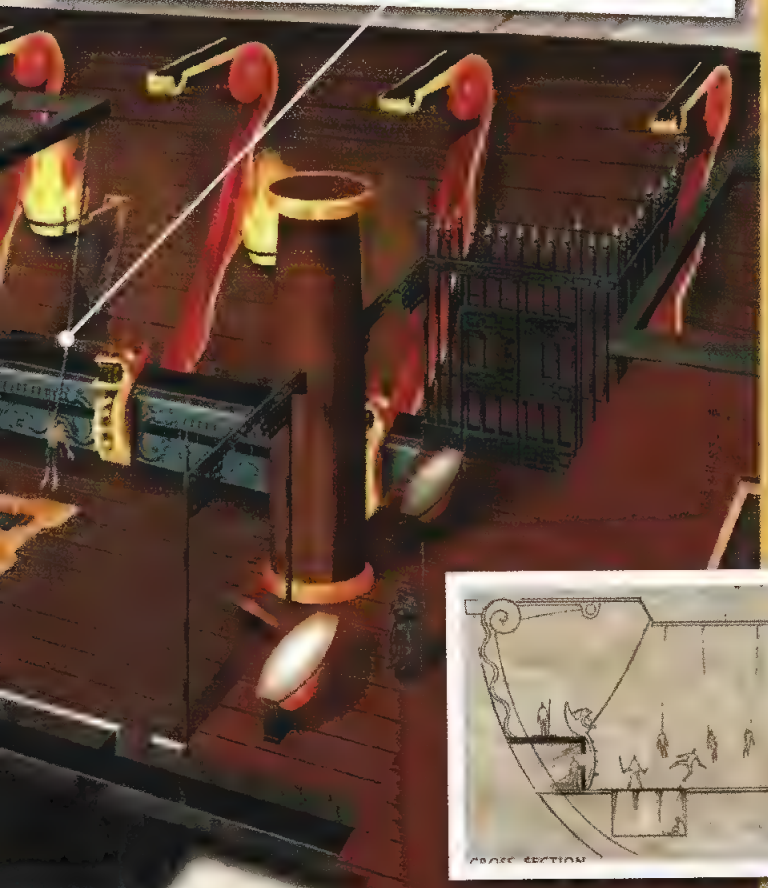




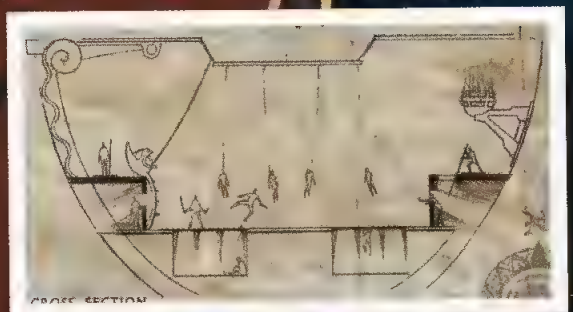


◄ ▲ The hanging corpses sway back and forth as the ship lurches, sometimes smacking into kombatants. Clever fighters might try to actually kick the bodies into their opponent, causing a bit of damage.

◄ As large and impressive as this level is, this concept illustration doesn't even show the full fighting area. The arenas in *Mortal Kombat: Deception* are massive!



▼ This design sketch shows just one level of the massive Netherbelly ship.



SIDE GAMES

But wait, there's more! As if cramming in all the new background features, the new Konquest mode, and full online play weren't enough, the insane *Mortal Kombat* team decided to heap even more work upon themselves. Instead of eating lunch or sleeping, these guys are creating not one, but two complete bonus games: *Puzzle Kombat*, and an unnamed strategy board game, both playable online. Either one of these games could stand on their own, but packaged with everything else, they help create the ultimate home version of *Mortal Kombat*.

STRATEGY BOARD GAME

Details are still sketchy on the exact rules, but here's what we know: you get to pick which characters you place around the board, and when opposing sides come into contact, you'll enter an arena where the two characters can fight it out under the same rules as the normal versus mode. This demands a unique mix of board strategy and fighting game skill, and is a great reason to learn multiple characters really well. Cool idea, huh?

PUZZLE KOMBAT

We don't have all the details on exactly how this one plays, either, but it's fair to say that fans of Capcom's *Super Puzzle Fighter* should be very happy. For the first time, pint-sized "super-deformed" versions of classic *MK* characters will appear, each offering their own unique strengths and weaknesses at puzzle playing. As an added bonus, each round ends with a fatality — on the board shown to the right, a giant spikey anvil crushes the loser from above. Can you just imagine playing this freakin' thing online?

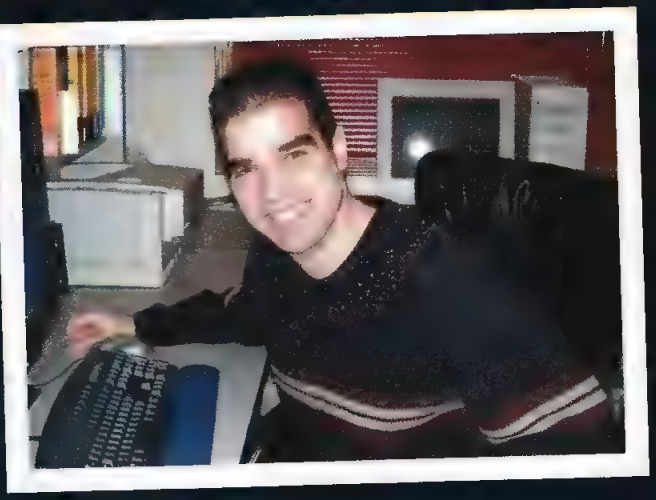
▲ We've heard that the *Mortal Kombat* board game will play kind of like the PC classic *Archon*, if you know that one.

► Which characters will you choose for your pieces? Will you save you stronger ones for later, or put them up front?

▼ *Puzzle Kombat*, played online, should be one of the coolest things in the history of cool things. Just look at those cute lil' guys maim and maul each other!

THE KREATOR SPEAKS

Introducing THE MAN himself,* Mortal Kombat *co-creator Ed Boon. Together with John Tobias, Boon introduced the series to the world way back in 1992 and has led the series forward ever since. Ed was eager to finally talk about his top-secret new* MK*, and we were happy to listen...



MK WILL REMAIN DARK AND MORE SERIOUS. HOWEVER WE RARELY CAN AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO INTRODUCE SOME ELEMENTS OF HUMOR ...

Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance kicked the series up to new levels of success. Why do you think that gamers reacted so positively?
I think *MKDA*'s success was due to a number of things all influencing the game at the same time. This was the first *MK* game on the current generation of consoles. It was five years since *MK4* was introduced to the public, and we added something new to the mix by giving each character three fighting styles to fight with. All of these factors contributed, but ultimately, the game was simply a lot of fun to play.

What were your main goals when you set out to create Deception?
Everyone on the team has a goal of topping their previous work on *Deadly Alliance*. My personal goal for *MK Deception* is to introduce an *MK* game that will deliver both what the fans of the previous games want, as well as a LOT of new things that they would have never thought of. Much more varied and interactive backgrounds (different levels, useable weapons, death traps) will make the backgrounds play a much bigger role in the outcome of the fight.

In addition, *MK Deception* is going to introduce a number of new modes of play that will help redefine *MK*. *Mortal Kombat* is no longer just a fighting game. It's a single player adventure mode, it's a board game, it's a puzzle game and finally, it's the first fighting game available online for the PS2. We wanted to introduce something dramatically different and dramatically better than *Deadly Alliance*, and I think we will.

What can you tell us about the story? For instance, where does the title, "Deception," come from?
MK Deception's story picks up right where *Deadly Alliance* left off, literally. Right off the bat, players will see what happens to the Deadly Alliance of Shang Tsung and Quan Chi, as well as finally being introduced to the Dragon King, who is our new boss character. The word "Deception" has multiple meanings in the latest *MK*. Characters in the game will be deceived, players will be deceived and magazine editors will be deceived — just kidding. One of our goals in *MK Deception* will be to never let the player feel like he can predict where the story is heading, so we have a lot of twists in directions that not many will be able to guess.

What's up with longtime *MK* favorites Raiden, Liu Kang, Sonya, and Kano?
As with any new *MK* game, we are going to feature brand new characters, as well as some returning classics. I wouldn't be surprised to see a number of the classic characters returning. We also plan on giving the returning characters all of their classic *MK* moves, as well as new moves that have never been seen in any other previous *MK* game.

How many Fatalities does each character have now?
Ahh, the $64,000 question... We've listened to the players, and every character will have at least two fatalities, as well as their own Hari Kari move.

The stage Fatality you showed us looked amazing — can you tease us with a few more examples?
We are very excited about the background fatalities and death traps we are adding to *MK Deception*. Players will be throwing each other into grinders, off cliffs onto some nasty spikes, into crushers, off buildings, into burning lava, as well as a number of other creative ways to mutilate, smash, and destroy their bodies... it should be fun!

Has the core fighting changed much?
We got such a positive response from the three fighting styles that we have kept the feature in *MK Deception*, but are expanding on the idea. The control of your character has been tightened up quite a bit and maneuvering your character around the background is faster and easier as well. With the introduction of weapons in the background (each with its own fighting style), damage regions and death traps, we are trying to make the environment that you fight in to be as influential to the outcome of the fight as the characters that were selected.

With *MK:DA*, you took the series back to its darker, more serious roots (no Friendships, Babalities, etc.). Will the same hold true for *Deception*?
For the most part, yes, *MK* will remain dark and more serious. However, we rarely can avoid the temptation to introduce some elements of humor into *MK* and I am sure that *MK Deception* will not be an exception.

***Deception* will not only contain classic *MK*-style action, but also complete bonus games, all playable online... are you guys crazy? Why load yourself up with that much extra work?**
Actually, those are some of the features we are MOST excited about. We are confident that when players see the variety of game experiences offered in *MK Deception*, they won't believe the amount of features, modes of play and new fighting mechanic all put into one product.

How has game development changed between *MK1* and *MK: Deception*?
That's an easy one. *MK1* had one programmer (myself), two artists and a sound designer. That's it. *MK Deception* has over 30 artists, programmers, animators and designers. There are also four sound designers, a full motion video group and a full time producer. The scope of making games these days is simply huge — literally like making a movie. Looking back, it seems like we were making *MK1* in our garage compared to the amount of work needed to create *MK Deception* today.

What's the toughest part about keeping a long-running series on top?
I think the toughest part is that balance between keeping the features that players like about the game, enhancing them and, just as important, adding something dramatically new to the mix that will keep the game novel and fresh, so players don't get the "been there, done that" feeling. We needed to rework the fighting mechanic on *Deadly Alliance* because the old mechanic was ten years old. I think this is why some of the recent fighting series have waned off, because they just kept introducing the same game with nicer graphics and lost some of the novelty that their earlier versions had.

What are your personal high and low points in *MK*'s history?
One of my very personal highs (in the twelve years that *MK* has been around) was definitely *Deadly Alliance*. Outselling *Tekken 4*, *Virtua Fighter 4* and *Soul Calibur 2* (on the PS2) was huge. *MKDA* was the FIFTH *MK*, and will be selling over three million games when all is said and done. To me, that is amazing. No other fighting game series can claim that, period. As far as the 2D *MK* games, I think most people would agree that *MK2* was probably the high point in that era. As far as the lows, I would say probably *Special Forces* and *MK Advance*, although I was not involved with either of those products. Overall, I am very proud of the fact that we have been around since the *Street Fighter II* days and are still a top selling game twelve years later.

***MK* has always been a very edgy, violent series — since *MK1*, has it gotten easier or harder to publish this type of game?**
Since *MK1*, I think it has gotten considerably easier to publish the *MK* games. A lot of games have come out that are far more violent and, with the ratings system that is in place, people will know what kind of content they will be getting when they see a game that has been rated "M" for mature.

***MK*'s continued success is rare for fighting games these days. Can the genre ever be as successful as it once was? What happened?**
I think one of the reasons fighting games got to be as popular as they were was because of the success of arcades at the time. Players would love to compete against strangers to see how their skills stood up against the best of a particular area. As arcades died down in popularity, so did the amount of challengers you could find to play against. I think with online play, players will be able to experience this kind of competition against an even bigger variety of opponents around the country. This can bring the whole "king of the hill" phenomenon of fighting games back to like it was in the 90's.

Finally, tell us something about *Deception* that you know you shouldn't — *you know you want to*...
MK Deception is going to have Barney the dinosaur, Fred Flintstone, Spider-Man, Ryu, Ken, Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny in it. That's the truth... no *Deception* here!

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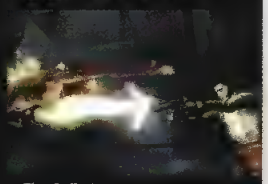
HOT GAMES

Don't waste a second; turn on over to these big games NOW!



▲ The Suffering *pg. 70*

▲ Destruction Derby Arenas *pg. 72*

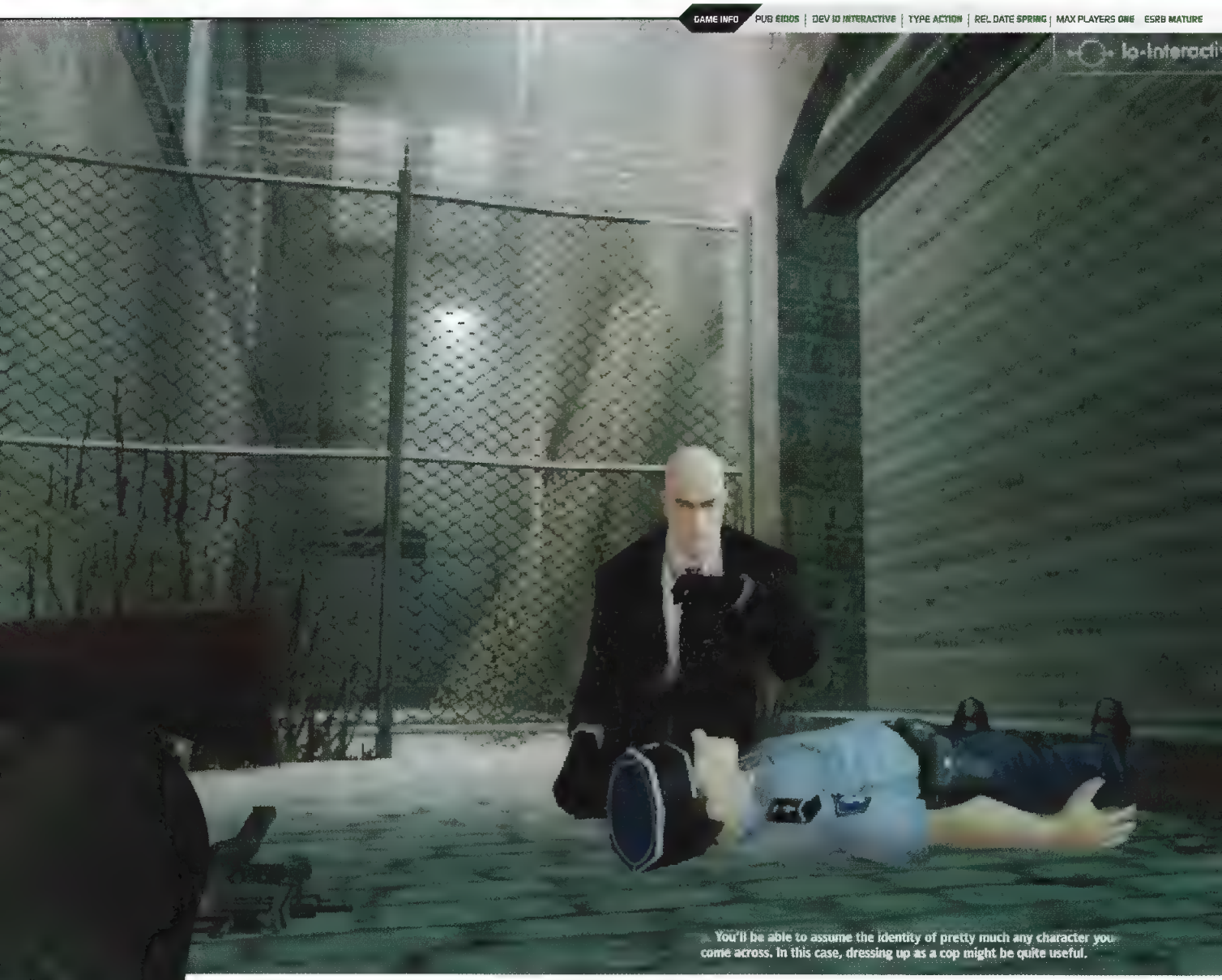
▲ Shellshock: Nam '67 *pg. 76*

HITMAN™ CONTRACTS

ONLY IN PSM NEW SCREENS

<< YOU'LL NEVER LOOK AT POOL CUES THE SAME WAY AGAIN >>

GAME INFO | PUB EIDOS | DEV IO INTERACTIVE | TYPE ACTION | REL DATE SPRING | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE



You'll be able to assume the identity of pretty much any character you come across. In this case, dressing up as a cop might be quite useful.

Agent 47 returns for his darkest and most violent mission yet

The *Hitman* series is one of those franchises that has improved significantly since its initial conception. The original game, which was only available on the PC, had definite promise, but suffered a bit from some major bugs and a lack of polish. The second game, having introduced Agent 47 to the console masses, spotlighted a more cohesive and enjoyable experience, but still included a somewhat rough learning curve. Now, with *Contracts* on its way, it seems that the third time really is the charm. In every way, it appears that our dark hero's return is bigger, better and most definitely darker.

From a purely technological standpoint, *Contracts* sports a crisp, new rendering engine, which goes a long way in offering some updated visuals. Polygon counts have been significantly upgraded, as have the details in textures, allowing for a far more realistic and larger world to play in. There's even been an enhanced particle system introduced that should hopefully deliver completely believable smoke and spark effects. Along those lines, the physics model has been refined, so death sequences should be even more enjoyable to watch.

Speaking of death sequences, they have always been one area of this series that has constantly shined. Being able to utilize your weapons and other objects in order to finish your enemies in clever ways was always

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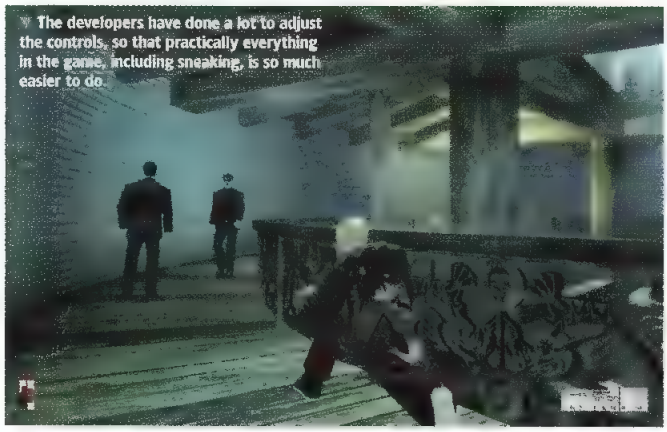
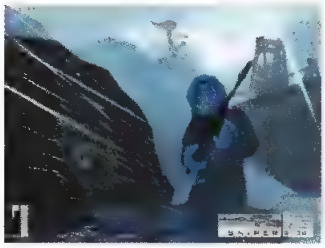
a nice reward. With that in mind, the developers worked hard in order to further flush out this fan-favorite feature. *Contracts'* environments will be littered with more "improvisational weaponry" that can be used as fatal tools in the hands of creative gamers. Trust us, when we say that you'll never look at pool cues the same way again. However, if that wasn't enough, it seems that there will be multiple death sequences based on each "weapon," adding up to even more variety and senseless cruelty.

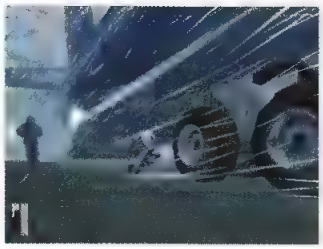
Having seen an early demo of *Contracts* up and running, we were



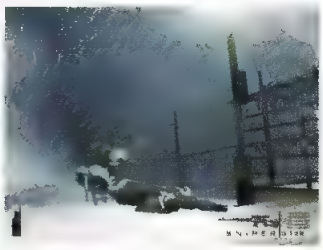
▼ The developers have done a lot to adjust the controls, so that practically everything in the game, including sneaking, is so much easier to do.



▲ For some odd reason, this screenshot reminds us of *The Thing* game, though that boat in the background seems strangely out of place.



▲ With larger environments and lots more enemies populating them, you'll have to come up with some clever places to conceal yourself.



▲ As with any stealth-based title, you'll sometimes need to move bodies into hiding places so that you don't alert the guards of your presence.

Endless Carnage

There's no doubt that *Contracts* will end up with a Mature rating, especially when you see some of the new kill animations and the way that the enhanced particle system handles blood.

▲▼ It may not always be of your own doing, but there's always seems to be a trail of violence that follows the Hitman. Talk about your bad karma.

PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action

◀ Dressing like a diver won't help you. 47 might "borrow" your costume, though.

▼ A sniper rifle is great, but you could also just grab a pool cue or some other element of the environment to do the job.

▶ We don't know his name, but we know his game. The mysterious 47 is back, UPC-code tattoo and all. The difficulty ramps up more smoothly this time, so it's easier to see this dark tale through to its end.

▼ It's great to see how much more detail and interactive objects were able to be included in this sequel. It just makes the experience feel more immersive.

pleased to see that the environments were generally larger than those found in the past titles. Being able to explore more and find our own unique ways to complete mission objectives really drew us into the experience. Also, with the nicely smoothened learning curve and the implementation of an EASY mode, it seems that the Hitman's latest killing spree will see a much larger assortment of "victims." We'll reveal more in the coming months, as we're definitely keeping our sights locked on this one. **STEPHEN FROST**

THE BUZZ

Bigger levels, more creative violence and multiple paths. What more could you want?

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

IO Interactive

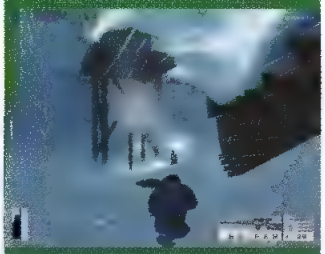
While still a relative youngster in the videogame industry, the up and coming, Denmark-based IO Interactive has accomplished quite a bit since its establishment in 1998. The company's first major release was *Hitman: Codename 47*, which went on to sell well over 600,000 copies on the PC. *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin* was an even greater success, with around 2 million copies ending up in gamers' hands.

Wanting to branch out a bit, IO decided to partner with Electronic Arts on the release of *Freedom Fighters* and is now working hard on the latest *Hitman* sequel. Needless to say, the company has blossomed into a serious development house and it will be interesting to see what future holds for it.

IO-Interactive

Doing The Things A Particle Can...

Thanks to an upgraded particle system, *Contracts* does a good job of creating realistic weather effects. The developers promise everything from rain to snow to some pretty amazing fog.



▲▼ With snow this good-looking, you'll be shivering in your seat, even after only a few minutes. We just can't wait to see how good the rain and fog effects are.

▲ He may not be the nicest guy in the world, but there's just something about 47 that we adore. Maybe it's the fact that he's always wearing a coat and tie.

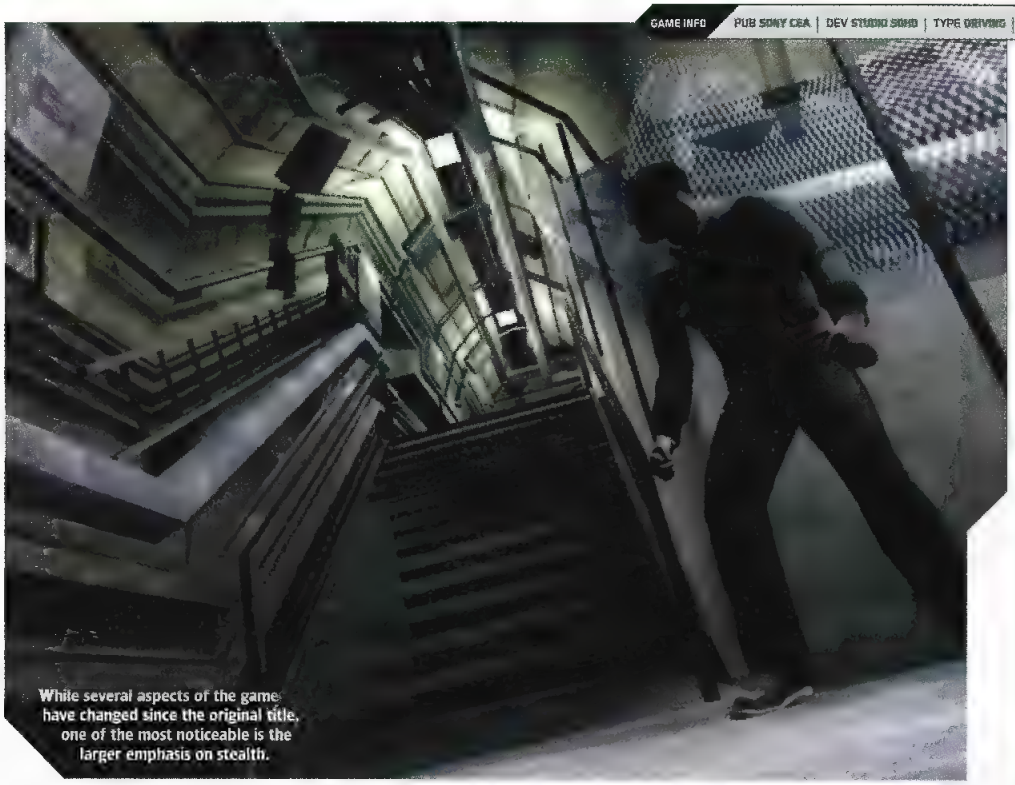
From A Distance...

Being a skilled hitman is no easy task. You have to be very proficient in numerous ways of killing. That includes up-close and personal attacks, as well as those " they didn't even see it coming" ones. Needless to say, this game allows you to perfect both types of combat and everything else in between.

▲ In unfamiliar environments, when you just aren't sure of how many enemies there are, it's generally better to keep your distance.

▲ Sometimes, though, you just have to get more hands-on, if you want a job done right. The results are often so much more satisfying.

GAME INFO | PUB SONY CEA | DEV STUDIO SOHO | TYPE DRIVING | REL DATE WINTER | MAX PLAYERS TBD | ESRB PENDING



While several aspects of the game have changed since the original title, one of the most noticeable is the larger emphasis on stealth.

THE GETAWAY 2

Sony takes us even deeper into the London underground

The original *Getaway* was a love-it-or-hate-it experience. While it offered some truly great gaming moments, and some of the finest presentation ever seen in a videogame, the dodgy AI, barely-functional aiming system, and choppy framerate had the game shooting itself in the foot. Over a year has passed since then, and the appropriately titled *The Getaway 2* is now in full development by Sony's London studio.

This time around however, the flawed Mark Hammond and copper Frank Carter will not be making a return. Instead, fighter, bouncer, and hired muscle extraordinaire Eddie O'Connor will be leading the game's narrative.

As the first game did, *The Getaway 2* will feature multiple perspectives on the storyline, though this time around there is expected to be more than two characters. The time structure is also rumored to be fractured, advancing the story through snippets of out-of-sync vignettes, a la Tarantino.

Taking place two years after the Getaway, the sequel will once again be set in gangland London. Utilizing a completely overhauled graphics engine, the environments should be substantially more atmospheric, and also densely populated.

The combat engine has also seen a revamp, which will include character- and location-specific moves. As expected, the AI and stealth elements of the game will also receive the same treatment.

As for vehicles, we don't know specifics, but the selection is said to be significantly larger than the first game's. Additionally, several big name clothing designers have been hired to outfit the game's cast.

There is little else known about *The Getaway 2* as Sony is keeping this one under wraps. Just know that the game will be bigger and better in every way. KAISER HWANG

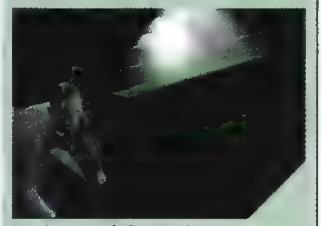
▶ **The new hero of *The Getaway*, Eddie O'Connor, just happens to be a local London boxer and an all-around badass.**

THE BUZZ

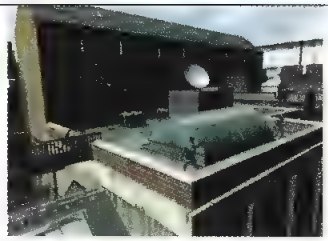
The production values of the first game but with more finely tuned gameplay? We're in.

Hide And Go Seek

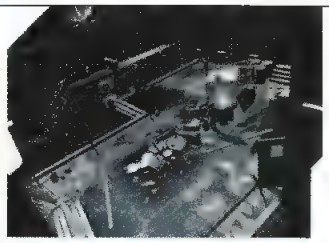
In most cases, our main characters will certainly be outnumbered and outgunned. Due to that, they're all going to have to focus on not being seen or heard. That is, until they actually want to be.



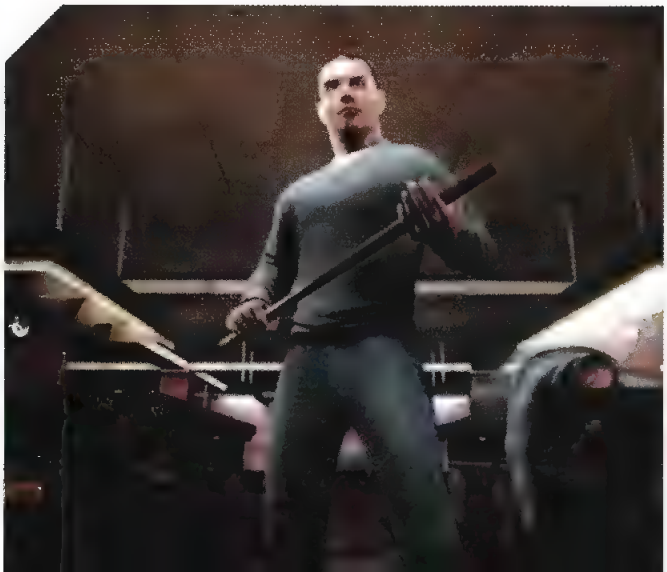
▲▼ **Players will have to learn to use the environments and shadows in order to keep enemies unaware. Then, you can seek them out and attack them from behind.**



▲ **For all you weapon fans, there will be plenty of gunfights to test out your boomsticks. Just don't stand out in the open during them.**



▲ **You'll see some more dramatic and varied camera angles, which really add to the visual look of the game. Here's a great view of a rooftop chase.**



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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Language
Violence

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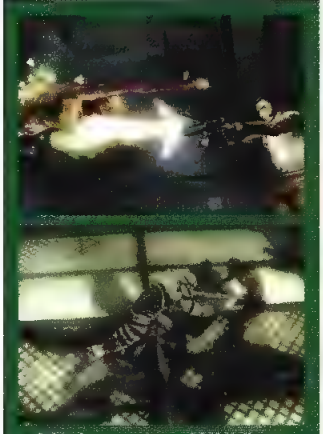
PlayStation®2

GAME INFO | PUB MIDWAY | DEV SURREAL SOFTWARE | TYPE ACTION/HORROR | REL DATE MARCH | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE

Creative Creatures

One of *The Suffering's* most interesting aspects is the sheer variety in the creature designs. We don't know where some of the influences came from, but they are certainly disturbing in numerous ways.



Aside from maybe an S&M Halloween, you're probably not going to run across disturbing creations like this. Be thankful for that.

Torque will definitely have his hands full with the assortment of strange, evil beings that show up in this game. Some of them are simply huge.

ONLY IN PSM NEW SCREENS

THE SUFFERING

A chilling experience that may leave you permanently disturbed

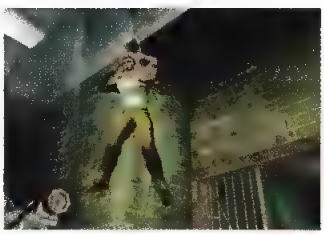
As if prison weren't scary enough, Midway is about to give us another reason to fear it — *The Suffering*. Set in a maximum security pen that's been overrun by horrific monsters, this game could be the start of a brand new fright franchise. *The Suffering* seeks to define its own genre — action horror — and from what we've played, the title fits.

More like a guns-blazing, *Aliens*-style romp through a demented hoosegow, *The Suffering* has progressed well since its early incarnations. Control has been tweaked, and the once-difficult camera has gotten consistently better. The game does a great job of building tension, with excellent lighting, good effects and an eerie sound palette that rivals most horror films. In addition, each of the horrific monsters, based on various methods of torture, has its own motivations and unique AI. For those who like their games steeped in blood, *The Suffering* is packed with more viscera and foul language than a trip to Crystal Lake.

The game does a good job of keeping the circumstances surrounding the incarceration of the main character (Torque) a mystery. The choices you make (you can actually kill NPCs instead of helping them, or torture helpless victims) mold your fate and determine whether you are guilty of the crime that put you in the clink. In addition, there are multiple beginnings the second time through the game. To borrow a phrase from Alex of *A Clockwork Orange*, this one looks "horrorshow." For the first time, we really are excited about going to jail. CHRIS CARLE/STEPHEN FROST

◀ Without a doubt, there's a lot of blood in this game. One look at Torque's color change and you can see why this title has earned itself a Mature rating.

▲ There's just something inherently disturbing about a jail. That's especially true when all manner of monsters are lurking about.



▲ Attacks can come from any angle, so always be aware of your environment. One moment of relaxation could very well end your life.

THE BUZZ

HBO's *Oz* has nothing on this baby. Your life sentence could be cut REAL short!

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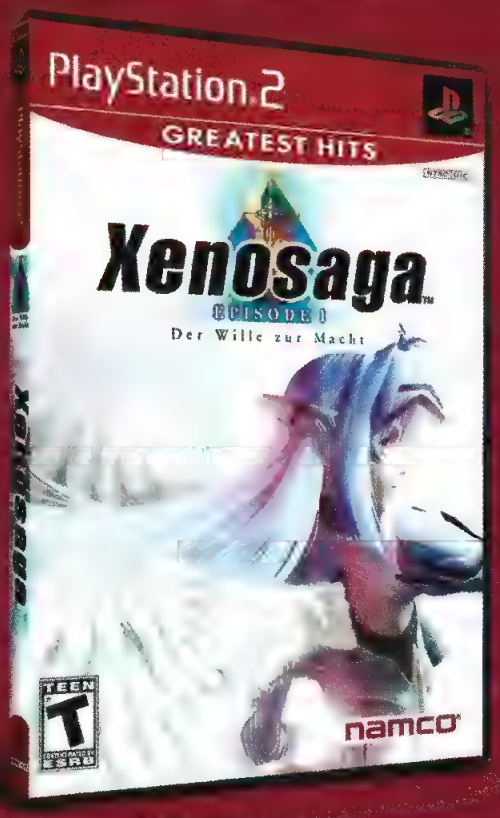
~GamePro, 4.5 out of 5

"...one of the coolest stories you'll encounter..."
~Official PlayStation Magazine, 4 out of 5



"...Xenosaga is to video games as the original Star Wars is to movies."
~GameSpot, 9 out of 10

"Xenosaga is truly a triple-A title..."
~Game Informer, 9.75 out of 10

"Calling this game epic would be an understatement."
~IGN

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Violence

PlayStation.2

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DESTRUCTION DERBY Arenas

GAME INFO | PUB GATHERING | DEV SONY CEE | TYPE DRIVING | REL DATE SPRING | MAX PLAYERS TWENTY (ONLINE) | ESRB TEEN

The PSone classic gets a new coat of paint

When the original PlayStation launched long ago, one of the most impressive games in its launch line-up was *Destruction Derby.* The game showed new possibilities for car-based games, and featured the most realistic, polygonal damage modeling seen in a home videogame.

But after a couple of sequels, the demanding nature of the physics and graphics, along with the aging PSone hardware had the series coming to an all too sudden halt. Fortunately, Sony has not lost faith in the franchise and is bringing it back in full force.

Destruction Derby: Arenas' core concept has not changed in the slightest — destroy all of the other cars. Everything else, however, will be seeing a massive upgrade.

First off, *Arenas* features 20 fully deformable cars, and host of characters to pilot them. The game's single-player mode will accent each character's individual traits through unique stories, rivalries, taunts, and endings. Of course, there will be character-specific cars, too.

Another area of improvement is in the track design. Including both bowls and arenas, each track is cleverly themed and will contain a copious amount of loops, ramps, and gap jumps. Interactive structures will also be in place, such as swinging wrecking balls and dense crowds to maneuver around.

Now we get to the meat of the matter: online play. Players will be able to take their customized vehicles online, and smash everyone else's while trying to save their own. With support for up to 16 players (four-player split-screen is also included), *Arenas* could be the closest we ever get to experiencing true destruction racing.

KAISER HWANG/STEPHEN FROST

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

THE BUZZ

We're aching to smash some cars up online. That's the fun, baby!

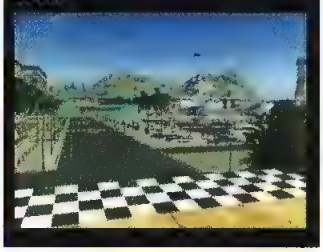
▶ There are characters associated with each main vehicle, so we hope that the storylines are all pretty interesting. We can say that most of the character designs are.

▲ Flipping your opponents' cars can earn you extra bonus points, so it pays to be a bit creative in how you crash into them.

Designs And Destruction

This latest *Destruction Derby* looks to have a nice mixture of tracks, ranging from traditional courses to full-out arenas. That guarantees that you'll have plenty of areas to crash and burn.

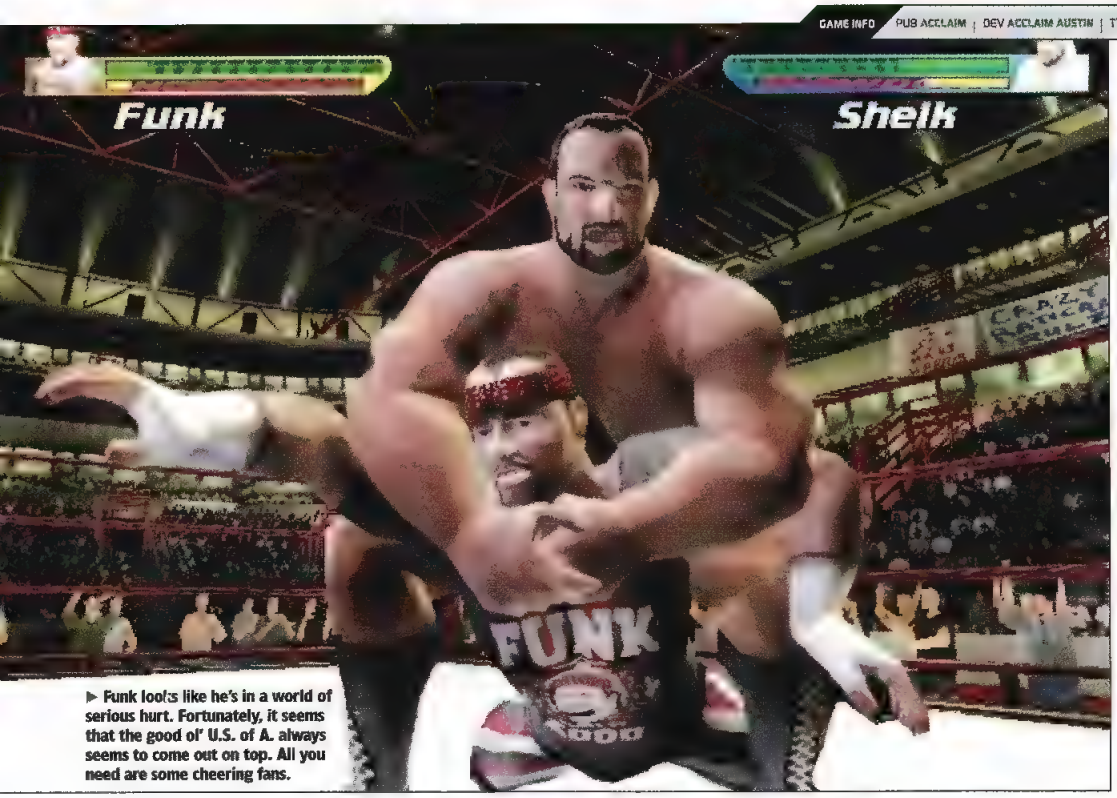
▲▼ It's good to see that a fair amount of time was spent in developing the 18 tracks, as that was always an important aspect of the series. You need to have plenty of opportunities to smash into other vehicles or the game's just not as fun.



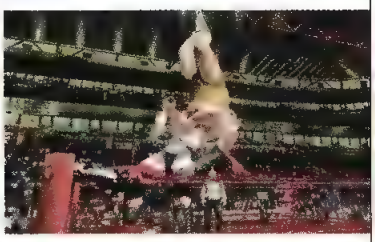
There's an art to smashing cars. You have to be sure that you cause more damage than you receive, so you have plan things out a bit in advance.

▼ What's a demolition derby game without huge explosions? Nothing... so you can expect all kinds of glorious mayhem in *Destruction Derby Arenas.*

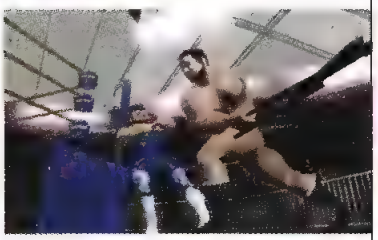
GAME INFO | PUB ACCLAIM | DEV ACCLAIM AUSTIN | TYPE FIGHTING | REL DATE JUNE | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB TEEN



▶ Funk looks like he's in a world of serious hurt. Fortunately, it seems that the good ol' U.S. of A. always seems to come out on top. All you need are some cheering fans.



▲ The Super-plex, while amazing back in the day, has become a pretty staple move in today's world of sports entertainment.



▲ Hacksaw is one of those guys you just had to root for. He can definitely take a lot of damage, that's for sure.

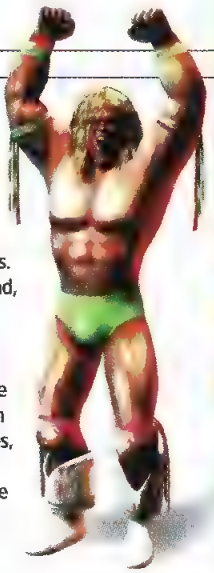
SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

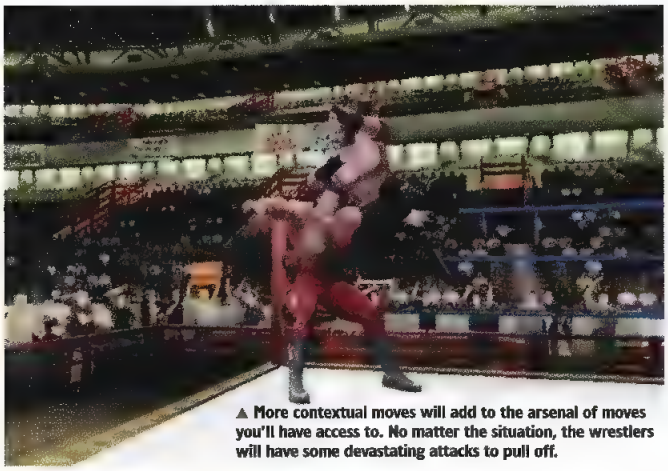
Step into the ring of yesteryear

After last year's *WWE Smackdown! Here Comes the Pain* set new standards for wrestling-based videogames, Acclaim found itself in a precarious position with its latest update to its own grappling franchise. It not only haD to raise the bar in gamers' eyes (and raise it big), it also haD to match THQ's terrific effort in terms of production and features. And that's not exactly a short order.

Unfortunately, we're still not sure how well it will step up to the challenge quite yet. Though we did get the opportunity to give *SHOWDOWN* a test drive somewhat recently, the build we sampled was still incredibly early — with animations, move sets, characters, and modes still under construction.

One aspect we can report on, though, is Acclaim's dedication to making the game more realistic. In 2002's *Legends of Wrestling II*, for instance, Andre the Giant could leap off the top rope like a high-flyer, while smaller guys pulled off devastating power moves on the biggest of their opponents. This time around, each wrestler acts and reacts just as they did when they were in the ring; with signature moves, attacks, and a strict adherence to a believable weight and physics system. *SHOWDOWN* even manages to incorporate real life venues like the Cow Palace, Toronto Sky Dome, and Madison Square Garden. It's little touches like these that can go a long way.





▲ More contextual moves will add to the arsenal of moves you'll have access to. No matter the situation, the wrestlers will have some devastating attacks to pull off.

And it's a long way we have to go. With plenty of development time still left before *Legends 3* makes its way to store shelves this summer, there are still a lot of questions lingering behind. Expect us to update you with more answers as they become available.

JEREMY DUNHAM/STEPHEN FROST

Legendary Wrestlers

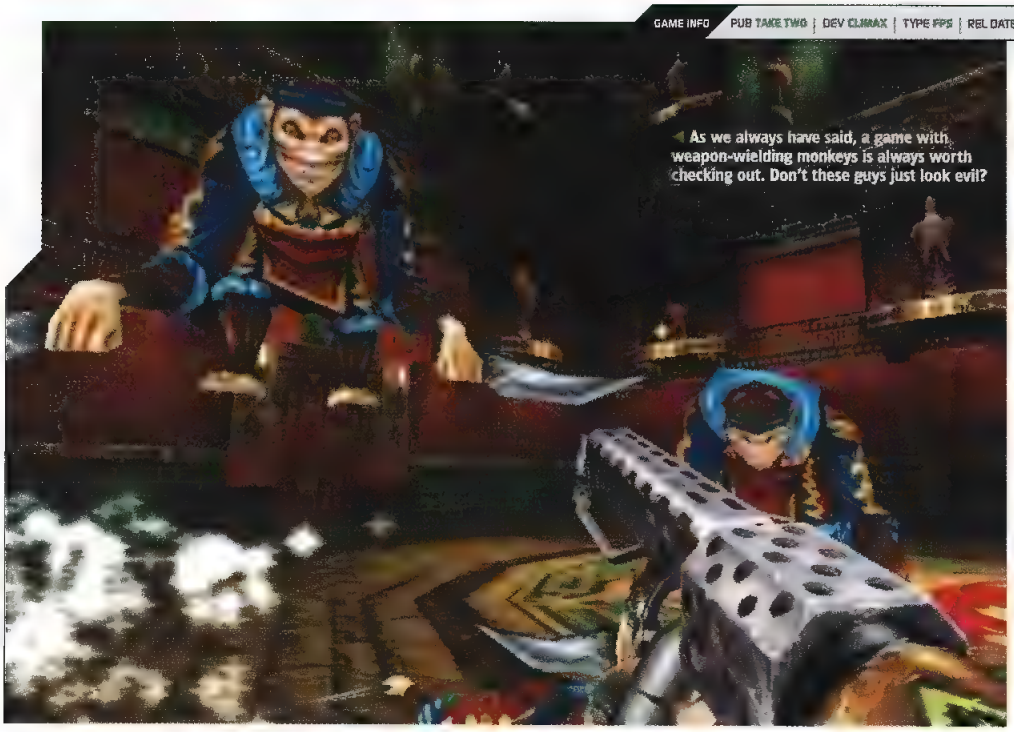
When playing this game, you can't help but get a major sense of nostalgia. Who doesn't love those classic days of wrestling, when the storylines were great and the wrestlers were truly memorable? That's what makes this game so enticing. It helps you to relive that golden era.

▲▼ From Lawler and Snuka to Sabu and The Dragon, you can't beat the cast of classic wrestlers that Acclaim has managed to put together.

THE BUZZ

More realism and recognizable venues seem to be taking this game in the right direction.

GAME INFO | PUB TAKE TWO | DEV CLIMAX | TYPE FPS | REL DATE SPRING | MAX PLAYERS EIGHT (ONLINE) | ESRB MATURE



As we always have said, a game with weapon-wielding monkeys is always worth checking out. Don't these guys just look evil?

▲ This guy doesn't look so tough, especially if you can keep your distance. Just watch him be able to shoot out lasers or something, though.

Combos In An FPS?

In an interesting twist to the genre, *Next Encounter* features a rather unique combo system, which awards players who are able to kill multiple enemies quickly. Get a high enough combo and Sam will go into a Super Combo mode where he can fire and move more quickly.

▲ Getting high combos is pretty easy, if you can get yourself surrounded by a large number of enemies. Just don't miss.

While it's hard to do when numerous enemies are around you, there are some good times to pull out that rifle and get them right between the eyes.

▲ The graphics might not knock you over, but the price and the intensity of this game may just win you over. Online play should be a blast.

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

The frantic shooter series gets its first console exclusive

Some games emphasize storylines, while others stress strategy and tactics. *Serious Sam* does neither. What the series is known for are hordes of enemies, hokey dialogue, and most importantly, nonstop action. *Serious Sam: Next Encounter,* the upcoming console-exclusive version of the game, is no different, but that doesn't mean the game doesn't have a few tricks up its sleeve.

In *Next Encounter,* Sam will traverse across 32 levels set in ancient Rome, feudal China, and the city under the sea, Atlantis. Accordingly, players will face off with similarly themed creatures, as well as some old and familiar faces.

Sam's memorable arsenal will also make a return, though many of them now have alternate firing modes. Take the grenade launcher, for instance. Outside of, well, launching grenades, it can now deploy deadly spider mines. A few new weapons will also make an appearance (think laughing gas), and are sure to fall in line with the game's signature humor.

Also new to the series will be the inclusion of vehicles. Sam will be able to hop into a jeep, a submarine, or a thresher to name a few. Vehicular transportation should help Sam achieve Super Combo killing sprees; a new feature that grants Sam increased speed, firing, and points.

The most notable addition to *Next Encounter,* though, is the inclusion of online play. While two players can still go at it in split-screen mode, the game supports up to eight players online in a bevy of modes that include FPS standards as deathmatch and capture the flag. With new levels and enemies, online play, and a retail price of only $20, *Next Encounter* is one game we're seriously looking forward to. **KAISER HWANG/STEPHEN FROST**

THE BUZZ

It seems this new game is going to require an even faster trigger finger. Count us in.

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Language
Violence

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As seen on CARTOON NETWORK.

PlayStation.2

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(s04)

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Developer Guerrilla Games (formerly known as Lost Boys) is also the team behind the much-ballyhooed *Killzone*. Both games feature diverse environments, sophisticated AI, and inspiring visuals. Oh, and shooting... lots and lots of shooting.

▲ *ShellShock* is uses the same technology as *Killzone*, which means we can expect stunningly realistic visuals and physics.

GAME INFO | PUB EIDOS | DEV GUERRILLA GAMES | TYPE ACTION | REL DATE FALL | MAX PLAYERS TBA | ESRB MATURE

ONLY IN PSM NEW SCREENS

The graphics engine allows for detailed environments and characters.

SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

The most graphic war game yet?

It was inevitable: as the World War II theme finally stalled, a new breed of historical war games has arrived. The new motif of the day? Vietnam. Trying to shine its way through a dense cloud of Vietnam War-themed games is *ShellShock: Nam '67*. Formerly known as *Tour of Duty*, *ShellShock* hopes to recreate the good, the bad, and the ugly associated with one of the world's most controversial wars.

As the name implies, *ShellShock* takes place in 1967, deep in the jungles of Indochina. You assume the role of a rookie soldier whose goal is to pacify the Viet Cong/NVA threat. Throughout your journey, you will be witness to heinous acts and controversial imagery that includes the slaying of innocent villagers, and the grotesque results of VC booby traps.

In trying to maintain a sense of realism, *ShellShock* will utilize Guerrilla Games' proprietary technology to construct missions of harrowing detail. From stealth-based assassination attempts to all-out battlefield disasters, the game will push gamers to use skills and tactics that real soldiers used in the Vietnam War. Likewise, expect the same from the Viet Cong and NVA as they use napalm attacks, booby traps, and sophisticated tunnel systems to take you out.

ShellShock will also feature an advanced AI system that is as life-like as it is deadly. That means for every calculated sniper shot, you can expect an accidental friendly fire death, or misdirected support fire. And that goes for both sides. Soldiers will also have several states of injury, not the binary standard of dead or alive that we're used to; wounded enemy soldiers will fall, but will make every attempt to end your life before theirs does.

A full range of U.S. weaponry available during the Vietnam War will be at your disposal. You can also pick up and use the enemies' weapons against them. Additionally, artillery and air strikes, as well as helicopter support units, can be called in to lend a helping hand.

With an emphasis on the harsh realities of battle, and impressive technology backing it up, *ShellShock* may take gamers to a place most have never been... war. **KAISER HWANG**

▲ What war game would be complete without a flamethrower?

THE BUZZ

We've never seen a more realistic war game. It's still got months of development to go.

▲ When visibility is low, tension is increased.

▲ A fallen soldier will attack until his very last breath.

GAME INFO | PUB ACCLAIM | DEV JUICE GAMES | TYPE RACING | REL DATE TBA | MAX PLAYERS TBA | ESRB PENDING

your fellow teammates in order to gain a bit of an upper hand against the competition.

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

JUICED

Live your pixellated life one quarter mile at a time

Although the excellent thrill-rider *Burnout* series has apparently left Acclaim's garage, it didn't take them long to hook up another sweet ride. Enter *Juiced*, the latest in a string of street racers to hit the PS2. So what's this baby got under the hood? In addition to realistic car physics, over 25 unique courses and a bevy of intriguing modes, *Juiced* promises 50 licensed vehicles, from the likes of Mitsubishi, Honda and Toyota. What's more, all of them will take realistic damage. Don't worry, though. With the cash you'll earn embarrassing the competition, a new coat of paint won't be tough to come by.

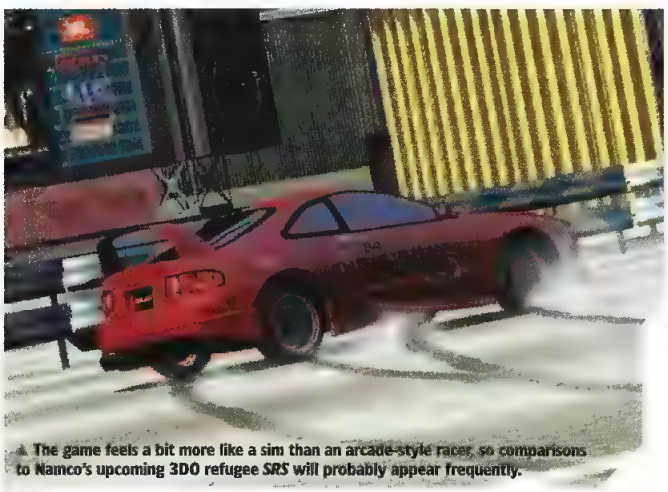
For those looking for more than paint, *Juiced* promises a deep customization system, allowing gamers to accessorize vehicles both inside and out with tons of after market equipment. In addition to hubcaps, decals and rims, tires, bumpers and more will be available for gear-heads looking to express themselves.

▲ Pick your own mods, from rims to decals.

Street vets will welcome the various race types, from checkpoint scrambles to circuit races. And, as far as modes go, check out the Solo practice option, or whip donuts and perform sideshow stunts in the Cruise mode. There's a deep Career mode planned as well, where you'll be able to race through a variety of challenges, some specifically designed for individual car models.

But most intriguing is the crew-based racing mode, which allows you to recruit a driving team, and give them commands to perform while racing. Have your guys run interference, clog the opposition's lanes, and generally create chaos on the quarter mile. Online play is also planned, but details thus far are limited. We should hopefully know more soon.

CHRIS CARLE/STEPHEN FROST

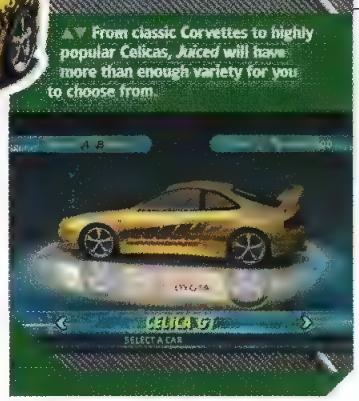


▲ The game feels a bit more like a sim than an arcade-style racer, so comparisons to Namco's upcoming 3DO refugee *SRS* will probably appear frequently.

▲ Similar to *Project Gotham Racing*, you can earn points and combo bonuses for stringing together various driving tricks.

More Cars Than A Showroom

With over 50 licensed vehicles to choose from, racing fans should have no problem finding a car that totally suits their driving and personality traits.



▲▼ From classic Corvettes to highly popular Celicas, *Juiced* will have more than enough variety for you to choose from.

▲ Give us a Skyline, some cool aftermarket parts and we'll make all the other racers eat our exhaust. We guarantee it.

THE BUZZ

Online play, customizable options and plenty of tracks should make this one serious racer.

BUJINGAI: FORSAKEN CITY

Flashy swordplay from anime pros

GAME INFO | PUB BAM! | DEV RED | TYPE ACTION | REL DATE MAY | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB RATING TEEN

▲ The action is just as heavy on swordplay as it is on eye candy.

If there's one thing that can be said about Red Entertainment, it's that they never skimp on aesthetics. *Gungrave*, one of the company's earlier PlayStation2 outings, featured character designs from *Trigun's* Yashuhiro Nightow. *Bujingai: The Forsaken City* takes a similar road and features the beautiful artwork of anime legend Toshiro Kawamoto *(Cowboy Bebop, Wolf's Rain)*, and a storyline crafted by Yosuke Kuroda *(Trigun, Scryed)*.

Though the game is set in the 23rd century and has a plot that's more sci-fi than retro, *Bujingai* retains a very classic, Asian theme. Consequently, the main character's move set can only be likened to the fancy wirework seen in such films as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Bujingai has the potential to fill any gaps that games like it have left empty. With gorgeous graphics and over-the-top, combo-heavy gameplay, the Forsaken City may be the perfect summer vacation spot. **KAISER HWANG**

▲ There is no lack of spectacular lighting effects in *Bujingai*.

THE BUZZ

It's fast, flashy, and has all the makings to be a potentially big-time action game.

▲ The Asian-inspired artwork in the game is refreshing — and beautiful.

▲ Influences from *Shinobi* and *Prince of Persia* is clearly evident in the gameplay.

▲ PlayStation 2 owners will get the benefit of several new multiplayer maps, a special co-op mode and this bonus Trieste level. Apparently, good things do come to those who wait.

▲ Having played a near-final version of the game, we were impressed with both the visuals and the intelligence of our teammates.

GAME INFO | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT CHINA | REL DATE MARCH | TYPE FPS | MAX PLAYERS EIGHT | ESRB TEEN

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3

SOCOM has some competition

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

Xbox fans have been enjoying the benefits of Ubisoft's stellar first-person shooter known as *Rainbow Six 3* for quite some time now, but with the PlayStation 2 version just a few weeks away, however, things are beginning to look up... and up and up and up.

For those unfamiliar with *Rainbow Six's* tactics-based gameplay, that's fine — as the built-in tutorial teaches you how to be an elite marksman in no time at all. And with the added benefit of USB headset support, gamers can give orders to their AI supporters, who react surprisingly better than what we've seen in other shooters of this type.

Of course, *R63* also offers up a couple of new features exclusive to the PS2 that go a long way for those of us who waited for the PlayStation 2 rendition: namely, the two-person cooperative play and Trieste bonus level; both of which are solid additions to an already strong list of content. It's all looking good, but we'll have our final impressions of *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3* next month.

JEREMY DUNHAM

THE BUZZ

This just might give *SOCOM* a run for its money online.

▲ Calling out orders, via the USB headset, works like a charm and really pulls you into the action. ***SOCOM*** better watch out.

COMBAT ELITE: WWII PARATROOPERS

Think Saving Private Ryan, Gauntlet style

GAME INFO | PUB ACCLAIM | DEV BATTLEBORNE | TYPE ACTION | REL DATE JUNE | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB RATING PENDING

▲ It seems the developers have managed to push the Snowblind engine even further, upping the amount of detail seen in the environments.

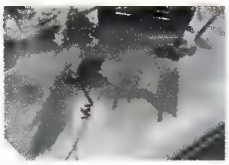
The Snowblind engine that brought us *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance,* its sequel, and *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* has been getting a workout lately. Looks like it's going to be in even better shape, thanks to the upcoming *Combat Elite*. Applying the engine to the realm of World War II, Acclaim seeks to keep the streak of top-down action fun very much alive. Employing the same feel of the previously mentioned games, players will also find similarities in the menus and level-up systems. In addition, the game will feature a two player cooperative mode.

Weapons will range from knives, WWII-era pistols and rifles, to grenades and other explosives. Players will be able to equip three at once, and most weapons will be usable in both ranged and melee combat. As characters battle across Europe, they will rank up, becoming more proficient as they gain experience. *Combat Elite* is set to release on June 6th, the 60th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, and we'll know shortly if it will leave just as much an impact.

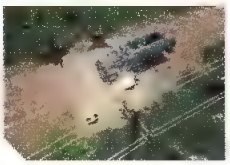
CHRIS CARLE/STEPHEN FROST

THE BUZZ

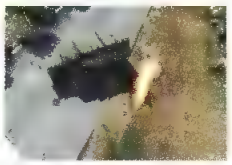
The Snowblind engine hasn't failed us yet, so we definitely have high hopes for this game.



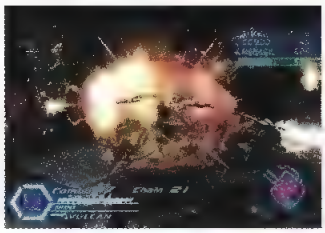
▲ **You'll see great-looking weather effects, like the falling snow in this screenshot. Everything looks so peaceful... until the shooting begins.**



▲ **While there will be vehicles in the game, you won't really be able to control or drive any of them. They're just for blowing up.**



▲ **The flamethrower is just one of the many WWII weapons that you'll have access to. However, you'll only be able to equip three at a time.**



▲ **See all the pink dots in the RADAR in the lower right? There will usually be ten or more enemies around you at any given time.**

▲ **Sho has several psionic abilities, which typically come with fancy visual effects.**

▲ **When you're hunting aliens, there's no telling what your enemies will look like when you find them.**

GAME INFO | PUB KOEI | DEV KOEI | REL DATE MARCH | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB PENDING

CRIMSON SEA 2

Sci-fi carnage with an Asian flair

▶ **Watch out, fellas — Feanay's got the looks that kill, and even if that doesn't work, she carries a big gun and a bigger sword.**

If *Chaos Legion* or Koei's own *Dynasty Warriors* series took place in a sci-fi future and starred characters equally at home with firearms and energy blades, it would probably look something like *Crimson Sea 2*. The game pits its two main characters: Sho, the psionically-endowed soldier of the future from the first game, and saucy newcomer Feanay against vast hordes of mutated, alien creatures. It's a simple enough formula, but as Koei has proven with the *Dynasty Warriors* series, it's still plenty fun.

While *Crimson Sea 2* doesn't look quite as pretty as its Xbox-only predecessor, it seems to play notably better. The controls are more solid, and the addition of a second playable character and some two-player co-op and competition modes looks to sweeten the pot. The mission variety is also more varied, and ranges from simple slash and burn or rescue missions to escort, smuggling, timed delivery, or infiltration assignments. Plus, the first game had a surprisingly good storyline, so we could be in for a real treat here. ERIC BRATCHER

THE BUZZ

Koei has the design of arcade-style, "man against the horde" games down to a science.

GAME INFO | PUB ACTIVISION | DEV LIONHEAD | TYPE SIM | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RELEASE DATE TBA | ESRB PENDING

THE MOVIES

If the very thought of shouting "Lights! Camera! Action!" makes you all warm and fuzzy, this Hollywood business sim may be just the ticket for you.

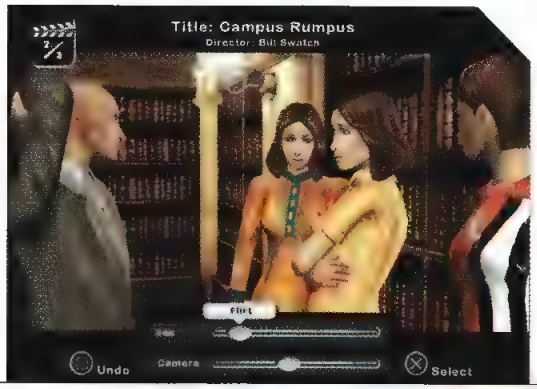
The Movies gives the player three big jobs to do. First, you must keep your studio in business by making good decisions about which films to make, how much to spend, and whom to cast. Secondly, you have to make sure the egotistical movie stars are happy enough to keep working and earn their pay. Finally, you have to make good films, right down to choosing costumes and directing individual scenes. Bring the popcorn!

ERIC BRATCHER

▲ Much of the game is viewed from an isometric or even top-down view, giving you a bird's-eye view of the shenanigans.

THE BUZZ

It's a movie biz sim from the minds behind *Sim Theme Park* and we'll definitely play it.



◀ You can actually direct each scene of the film, placing the camera and choosing the tone. You can even tell the actors to sex it up a little, if need be.

GAME INFO | PUB SONY CEA | DEV 989 SPORTS | MAX PLAYERS EIGHT | TYPE SPORTS | REL APRIL | ESRB EVERYONE

▲▶ While there, unfortunately, won't be any sort of online support, Sony is hoping the game's deep career mode will keep hardcore fans riveted.

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2005

After Sony's respectable sophomore soccer effort, the crew returns to the pitch for a brand new season, this time with *World Tour Soccer 2005*. Featuring Los Angeles Galaxy striker Carlos Ruiz as the cover athlete, the game hopes to build on the solid foundation established the last outing. *WTS* features hundreds of teams, sprinkled across 22 leagues from every inch of the globe, as well as classic squads from decades gone by. Sadly, there will be no online play, but a meaty career mode, multiple broadcast languages, reworked AI and 8-player multi-tap play promise to sate hungry soccer fans' appetite for footy. Looks like yet another promising option for the soccer hardcore. CHRIS CARLE

THE BUZZ

This is a surprisingly competitive genre this year, but *WTS 2005* is ready to play.

▲ Finally, we get to play as a bad-ass Ninja. Hattori Hanzo is going to be our first choice when we get reviewable versions of the game in.

▲ In most instances, you'll see quite a few more opponents on-screen at a given time. This game definitely pushes the engine to the max.

GAME INFO | PUB KOEI | DEV OMEGA FORCE | REL DATE MARCH | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB TEEN

▲ With improved intelligence and group tactics, the enemy will do a much better job of surrounding you.

SAMURAI WARRIORS
戦国無双

KOEI's offshoot of the *Dynasty Warriors* series (cleverly named "*Samurai Warriors*") is almost complete and on track for its March appearance on store shelves. With only a few weeks to go before we get our shot at the final box copy, we had the opportunity to give an almost finished pre-build a thorough playthrough. Let us just say one thing: "Wow".

Though the game is at its heart, the same type of experience as *Dynasty Warriors*, this samurai iteration takes everything we've known a step further. We aren't just referring to the new characters, better visuals, and increased gameplay modes either: we're talking about the improvements to the gameplay itself. Faster, stronger, and more spectacular than we've seen them before, the enemies in this actioner are relentless, and know enough group tactics to whip your butt on a regular basis. The randomly generated aspects of each stage don't make it any easier either -- but we're enjoying every second of it. Plus, it adds some nice replay value.

We suppose that we can hold off for another month before we begin to gush any more about entertaining *Samurai Warriors* truly is. Hopefully you can too. JEREMY DUNHAM

THE BUZZ

Dynasty Warriors with ninja? Do we even need to tell you how cool this should be?

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From the Creators of Naval Ops: Warship Gunner™

MARCH 2004

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence

3DCGデザイナー募集中!! 勤務地:カナダまたは日本 応募方法など詳細は www.koei.co.jp/html/jobolfer をご覧ください

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PlayStation®2

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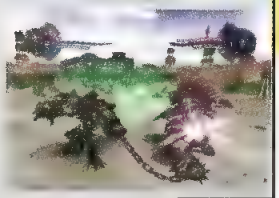
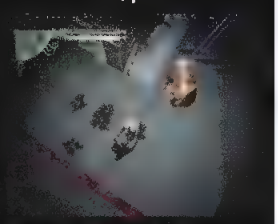
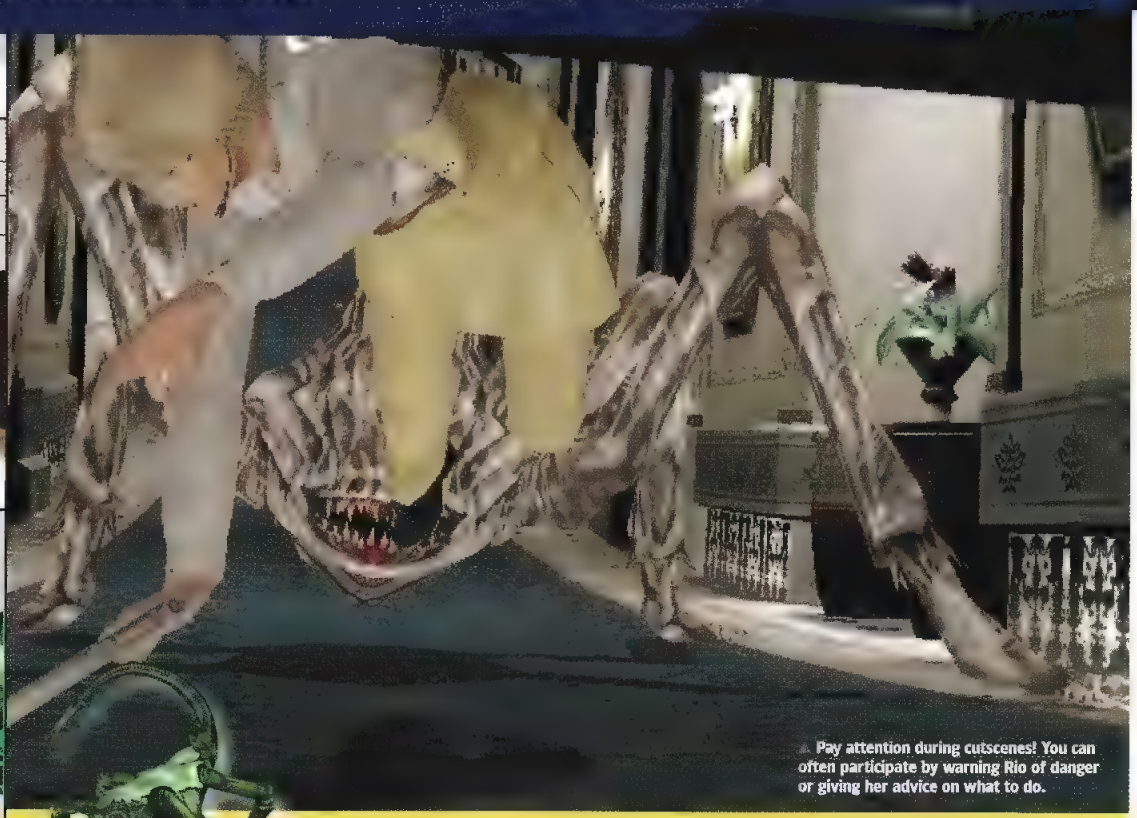


Fallout: BOS, p. 86



NFL Street, p. 86



Pay attention during cutscenes! You can often participate by warning Rio of danger or giving her advice on what to do.

LIFELINE

Lost in space? PSM dials 1-800-GET-SKLZ

General Tips

If you can't figure out what to call something, you can often say something like "look under the sink" or "check the blue box" to get Rio to do your bidding.

The key to combat is finding out each enemy's weak spots. They all have them, whether they be the Slugs' stomachs, the Top Shell's eyes, or even the Squid's tongues.

Don't just "check" readable items; "read" them. Also, there are about a zillion paper items, from magazines to invitations and newspaper to blueprints, so be ready to make lots of guesses as to what a given item really is.

Rio usually just walks, but if you tell her to "hurry" or "run", she will.

Always check your map to make sure you've searched in every location of every room.

You can buffer, or pre-load, commands during battle. Press the talk button and give the command (for example, "Shoot", or "Dodge left, shoot, shoot") normally, but wait until the exact moment when you want Rio to follow the instruction to release the button. This is especially helpful when you're waiting for an enemy to expose a weak spot.

From time to time, Rio will locate Key Words and Chips. Key Words give you extra battle commands, like Strafe and Low Kick. Chips unlock minigames after you've completed the main game.

Basic Walkthrough

Here's a quick and dirty list of locations, puzzles, and specific words and phrases that will come in handy. Note: If you need some more help, check out the Spoiler Zone sidebar.

Security Room
Key words: "Get Up", Naomi, Deal, Ready, Consultation, "Second dispenser from the right", Middle PC

Guest Room One
Key Words: Briefcase, Emergency Panel, "Under the sink"

Guest Room Two
Key Words: Gloves, "Check gloves", "Check dress", Catalog, Code Note

Guest Room Three
Key Words: "Look Out!", Shutter Key, "Heal capsule on table", "Under the dresser", Cigar Case.

Guest Room Four
Key Words: Rations, "Behind chair", "Check the other side of the invitation"

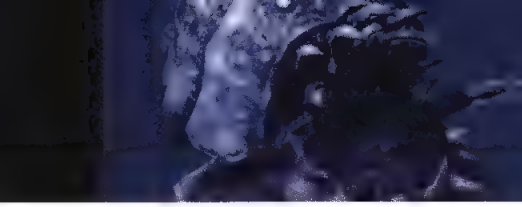
Sun Suite
Key Words: Toilet Lid, Fruit, "Health beside toilet"

Equipment Room
Key Words: Notice, Power Panel, Shelf (right, left, middle)

Infirmary
Key Words: "Use I.D. card", Drawer
Key Events: When standing near the operating table, say "bad" when prompted to get an interesting story hint.

Shutter 4
Key Word: "Now"

Restrooms
Key Words: "It's okay", "please", "yes", "Check inside the trash can", "Second stall



<< THE KEY TO COMBAT IS FINDING OUT EACH ENEMY'S WEAK SPOTS >>

The beastly beat-down

Trouble with the critters in Lifeline? Keep your distance, remember that you can "flee", and remember that all enemies have serious weak spots that you should never hesitate to exploit.

Caterpillar: concentrate on blasting its three eyes. A fourth, red eye will appear. Blast that too, and (if necessary) polish it off with shots to the tail, mouth, and body.

Leech: Shots to the mouth and gut whenever it raises its head will kill this common enemy. Watch out for the dark gray ones – they're very durable.

Squid: Watch its animations. When it shakes its "head", pre-load the command "tongue, shoot, shoot" and give it a taste of lead as soon as it sticks the slimy thing out.

Frog: First, shoot its front legs. Then, target its stomachs – that's right, it's plural. When they're gone and the red stomach appears, blast the mouth or tail to flip the beast and shoot the red stomach.

◀ Target an enemy's weak spots relentlessly, then blast any available body part to finish the job.

Top Shell: This guy is a pain, but his eye is his Achilles' Heel. Shoot the eye whenever it's exposed, and if he teleports directly above you, either "flee" or step "back" and time a "jump" (if you found that key word), then unload into its ocular orb. Be patient.

Plant: First, shoot the branches, then fire away at its exposed eyes. If it covers them, shoot the covering leaves or branches and resume your attack on the eyeballs.

from the left"

Guest Room Five
Key Words: "Shoot the bucket", "There's a chip in the bathrobe", "Take wig"

Moon Suite
Key Word: Look Right

Receiving Port
Key Words: Power Panel, Gate Switch

Control Staff Quarters
Key Words: Jar of Candy, Dinnerware, Coffee Beans, Wax Paper, Shampoo, Employee ID, PC, "look under the bench"
Key Events: To enter Jonathan's room, say the name of the thing he's collecting. Here's a hint: he ordered all the candy. Use the PC in Jonathan's room to give your cameras night vision. To enter Gustav's room, the paper you find under the bench offers a hint.

Service Staff Quarters
Key Words: "It's Okay. Cheer Up", "Get the warehouse key"

Warehouse
Key Words: "Run Away!"
Key Event: If you can't see here, go back to Jonathan's room and be certain you've downloaded the night vision upgrade for your cameras.

Ducts
Key Words: Blue, Red, Green, Stop, Hurry

Waiting Room
Key Words: Gino, "Use the front copier", "Under the bench"
Key Events: To get the Restaurant Key, you have to say Jonathan's full name. You should have already come across it.

Observatory Restaurant
Key Words: "Launch a Grenade", "Knock over floor lamp"
Key Event: Be sure to use grenades to destroy all the panels in the middle of the room. The enemies here will respawn if you need grenades or health, but farming them isn't recommended unless you're very skilled.

Elevator
Key Events: Remember that one of Rio's battle commands is "Back". Some important information may already be in your possession. Also, Hallway Two is too much trouble – stick to Hallway One.

Break Room
Key Words: Mug, Tissue Paper, Tea Bag, "Clean up the coffee granules", "Open the trash can", "Stick him up"

Manager's Office
Key Words: "Shoot!", "Take the document from the desk",
Key Events: The key to opening the safe is to turn the tumblers so that the pairs of numbers match the numbers on the clue you should have found in this very room.
Battle Strategy: Keep your distance, target any body part that glows red, and dodge to the side to avoid the projectiles

Exhibit Room
Key Words: "Ready, Set...", "Shoot red lever", "Shoot yellow lever", "Hide", "Run"
Key Event: When you and Rio attempt to unlock the door, you actually need to turn the switch to "on" rather than "off". Go figure. Once inside, you'll need to enter three numbers into another type of "lock". Rio will guide you through the first two (be careful on the second, though). For the last number, remind her about the "DVD", and then take the hint the game will give you. Finally, ALWAYS run from the blue alien.

Laboratory
Key Words: "Look up", Sample Case, Control Panel, Experiment Rack 2
Key Event: Keep your eye open for an important, subtly-placed item here.

Corridor
Key Event: Rio will encounter a by-now familiar character here. When Rio's headset falls off, speak that character's name.

Shuttle Bay
Battle strategy: This guy's very rarely vulnerable. First, just shoot the slow-moving grenades that he launches as a sort of 3D, Gradius tribute. He'll eventually put up a shield and start charging an unavoidable plasma barrage. However, if you can kill the shield generators fast enough, his charging will be interrupted and he will not only attack, he'll be vulnerable. Blast him, and repeat as necessary.

SPOILER ZONE!

Sometimes, you don't want hints, you want the straight dope: a full disclosure, the unabridged edition. You want answers. No problem. Here are the solutions to some of the game's more vexing puzzles – just don't cry to us for ruining the suspense.

Guest Room Two: The safe code is 2021.

Equipment Room: Find the notice. It shows the path to take on the broken lift to get to shelf you want.

Infirmary: The weapon is a "Molotov Cocktail"

Restrooms: Use our list of key words to coax Rio to enter, and shoot the mirrors to find the code to unlock the closet.

Control Staff Quarters: To enter Johnathan's room, say "Strawberry candy." To enter Gustav's room, say "Two Chloro, Three Methyl Pentane"

Waiting Room: The disc you want is the one with "Red and Blue Stars." To open the voice lock, say "Jonathan Turner".

Elevator: The elevator code is 0423.

Break Room: Clean up the coffee granules to find a badly needed key.

Manager's Office: To open the safe, say the following combination: "Right", "Four". "Left", "Six". "Right", "Two".

Exhibit Room: The lock is a simple timing puzzle. The bomb, however, is defused using the numbers 15, 50, and 15.

Laboratory: There's no

▶ **Okay, we're only going to type this once: for the third bomb number, Takayama just turned 60, and the year in-game is 2029, so he was born in the year 1969. Thus, the sum of 6 and 9 is...?**

trick to jettisoning the Experiment Rack. Just input the numbers Rio tells you. It helps to listen to her say them, pause the game, write them down, then unpause and bang them out quickly.

Corridor: Say "Naomi".

Final Password: Oh, please. We got you this far – this one's up to you.

TAKE THE PSM CHALLENGE!

RULES You can't send an entry for each challenge. If you cheat or use codes, you'll be disqualified. The final letter for the contest will be accepted on May 1st. If there are multiple winners, the final winner will be decided by the best paragraph that explains why you're the winner. Send a picture or a videotape (non-returnable) and a short paragraph explaining why you're the winner. Sorry, no e-mail entries! This contest is open only to readers living in the United States, age 18 years or older. PSM reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater monetary value, if necessary.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:
PSM April Challenge #
(the challenge you're entering)
c/o Future Network USA, 150 North Hill Drive,
Brisbane, CA 94005.

THE CHALLENGES

Challenge #1: Seven Samurai 20XX
Defeat the seven extra bosses showcased in this month's strategy and unlock the Coliseum mode.

Challenge #2: Lifeline
This one has two parts: first, finish the game and show us the save screen with the completed data. Second, there's a room with a table and three blue cups on it. Tell us the words the game uses to describe all three cups.

Challenge #3: Nightshade
Unlock at least one of the alternate characters or costumes and prove you've done it.

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE PACKAGE

MVP 2004 game
MX Unleashed game
Crimson Sea 2 game

HOLIDAY WINNERS

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004
Mike Riley, Colombus, Ohio
Monster Hunter 4
Tyler Marconis, Greenwater, WA
Legend of Kain: Defiance
M. Hildebrand, Colorado Springs, CO

▼ Oniwaka is just one of the hidden boss characters in *Seven Samurai 20XX*. Like all of the game's characters, he's designed by cult favorite artist, Moebius.

SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

Special modes and secret bosses — straight from the dev team!

Unlockable Modes

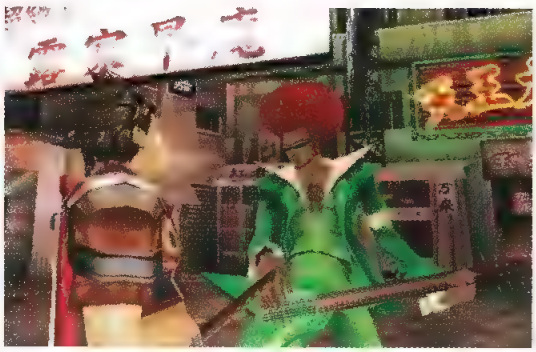
Seven Samurai 20XX has big rewards for winners, including Coliseum Mode, in which you take on the game's major bosses in one-on-one arena-style battles. Unlocking this requires beating a number of non-major bosses hidden throughout the game. Here's how to seek them out:

CHAPTER 3

Note: Before hunting down the six secret bosses in chapter 3, you must first defeat Kyric, the stage's main boss.

Pyro

After the casino is blown up, proceed to "Chinatown - Fresh Produce Market" to find a man in a green suit with a red afro. This is Pyro. Approach him to trigger a cut scene, then talk to him twice to pick a fight.



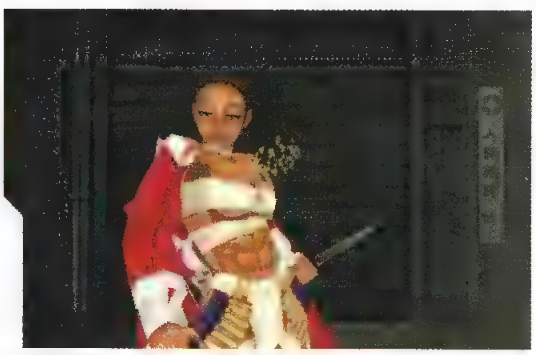
▲ "No, I don't know any Linkin Park, but how 'bout I jam you some Earth, Wind, and Fire?"

Morozumi

After defeating Pyro, run through "Chinatown - Lower Area Ward" and up to "Chinatown - Upper Area Ward." Go up the stairs and head west to find a dark-skinned woman with a red cloak. This is Morozumi, and you must chase her down before she'll battle you.

To do this, go down the ramp to the west once she leaps down to the area below you, then immediately turn right down the corridor, passing an elevator on your left. From there, head north out to the rooftops, east to the fence, then north across the scaffolding and down the hallway to the north to trigger the first cut scene.

Once the cut scene ends, follow the corridor east, then north and finally west. At the doorway, you will trigger a cut scene. Proceed south then west across another scaffolding. At the next platform, she's yours.

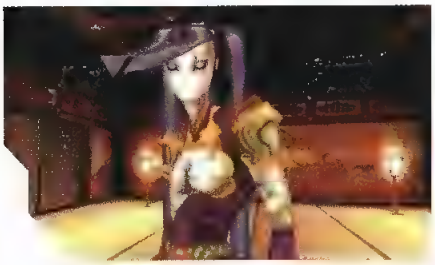


▲ Morozumi shouldn't be too difficult to pick out of the crowd.

Tsubaki-Dayuu

Once Morozumi is defeated, proceed north up the stairs to "Center Street - Highest Ward". Go west, then south into a large area. Continue west across the bridge and into a large room. Here, take the elevator to "Japanese Quarter - Broad Street." Head west to the main street, then take the northeastern exit to "Japanese Quarter - Red Light District Square". Proceed north to "Japanese Quarter - Red Light District," then continue north until you trigger a cutscene that introduces Tsubaki-Dayuu.

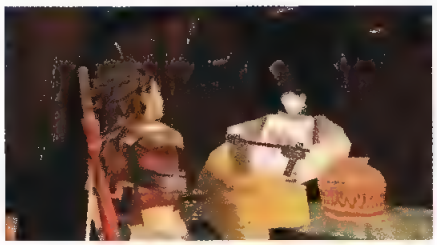
After the scene ends, follow the path clockwise, dispatching enemies until you come to a dead-end. Approach the south doors to start the fight with Tsubaki-Dayuu.



▲ "Hi, I'm Tsubaki-Dayuu. Welcome to my one-woman show: The Nightmare After Christmas."

Gohtenmaru

Return back to "Japanese Quarter - Red Light District Square". Run south across the bridge and through the door to the west and "Japanese Quarter - Broad Street." From there, follow the main road south to the open area. Along the east wall, find Hanzo, the man sitting on the table, and talk to him to initiate the fight with Gohtenmaru.



▲ Wise man say, "fruity guy with stick is usually master of ass kicking."

Oniwaka

After defeating Gohtenmaru, the large door opens behind him, granting him access back to "Center Street - Elevator Hall." Go east to "Chinatown - Upper Area Ward" and continue until you see a large red door. Approaching it will grant you access to Oniwaka's level.

Ushiwaka

Leave Okiwaka's level and head west to find an elevator. Take it up to "Chinatown - Highest Area Ward," then go north to the sealed door. Proceed through it and head west.

▲ "I'll get you, Power Rangers!"

CHAPTER 7

Brahman

After killing off both enemy groups in "Town of the Warriors - Eastern Zone 2," backtrack to the east to initiate another fight. Watch carefully as the cutscene reveals a new path to the north. Walk north across the newly-discovered bridge and through the door to fight Brahman

Once you have defeated Brahman, exit to the northwest. This will put you back in "Town of the Warriors - Eastern Zone 2." After you finish the game, you will be rewarded with new modes, including Coliseum Mode.

▼ As usual, guys with glowing fists rarely prove trustworthy.

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fc2277

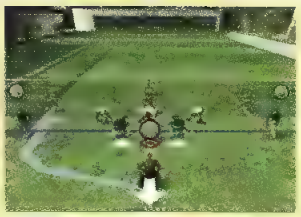
NFL Street

Stuck in a rut? Try these go-to plays from the developer

So, you think they call it "Street" because you're always getting your face pushed down into the pavement? The boys over at Tiburon are here to help.

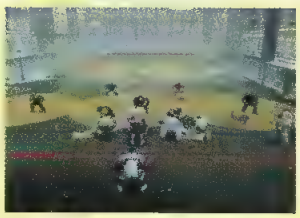
SLASH

This weak-side running play works best with a quick running back who can get to the outside in a hurry. If your O-line holds, you can get around the corner and into single coverage, where you should be able to juke your way to a big gain. Be careful not to overuse this play though, or the opposing defense will bring another defender into the zone, which is likely to blow up the play in the backfield.



CROSSES

Crosses are a perfect choice against a defense that favors man-to-man coverage as opposed to a zone. The key is to release the ball early, before either receiver reaches the sideline.



ZONED OUT

One of our favorite long pass defenses. A two deep and three short zone configuration makes it tough for an attacking offense to find an opening anywhere on the field.

Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel | *Collector's Edition Carnage*

In addition to the three extra characters unlocked as you complete each act, there are three secret weapons. Here's how to find them:

Red Ryder BB Gun: Chapter 1

When Vidya tells you to kill all the raiders and get into the warehouse, try to save all 37 townies. The Vaultdweller will fork over this weapon inside the warehouse. It inflicts 1 – 101 damage and has unlimited ammo.

The Meat Cannon: Chapter 2

At the save machine on the bridge level before going down to the docks, make a "Leap of Faith" straight past the machine into space. You should land on an invisible walkway. Walk straight to the floating pieces of a broken bridge, following the pipes and concrete to an area containing a lot of ghouls with shotguns in front of an ice-cream truck and a chest containing the Meat Cannon. This weapon doses out massive amounts of damage and has unlimited 'meat'.

The Slugger: Chapter 2

In the first docks level, there is an alleyway before the player gets to the exit. In this alleyway are two fenced areas that have a ghoul trapped in each. Stand on a container and lob grenades over the fence to kill the ghouls. A giant, glowing ghoul will appear at the alley's entrance. Kill it to find The Slugger, which pounds out big league damage and has incredible knock-back.

▼ Simply playing the game will unlock Rhombus as a playable character, but do you know how to find the Red Ryder BB gun? We're here to tell you!

CODES

NFL STREET
Unlockable Teams and Locations

Select NFL Challenge and enter the following profiles. Once the content is unlocked, you can back out to the main screen to select another game mode or just continue to go through the NFL Challenge Mode.

Note: Profiles are case sensitive and cannot be combined.

Profile	Unlocks
Travel	All Environments
Excellent	X-Ecutioners team
Classic	NFL Legends
Kay Slay	Kay Slay's team
AW9378	NFC W, AFC S, NFC N, AFC N, NFC E, AFC E, NFC S, AFC W

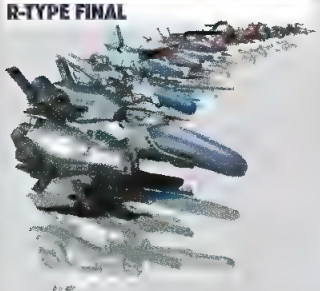
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II
Enter the following cheats during gameplay.

Invulnerability and Level Warp
Press and hold L1+R1+△+□+○+✕, then press START

Note: after level warp, press ○ to exit the menu

Instant level 10, 45 points, 500,000 gold
Press and hold L1+R1+△+□+○+✕, then press R2

R-TYPE FINAL



Unlock the machines below by entering the following number codes in the Museum within the game.

Machine 3 (R-9A)	52700725
Machine 24 (R-9B)	20780278
Machine 59 (TP-3)	10262001
Machine 100 (R-100)	10099201

MAX PAYNE 2
Code entered during gameplay.

Unlock All Levels / Game Modes
□□□✕←→←→□□+
□✕←→←→
(after entering the code, return to the main menu and all modes will be unlocked under New Game)

WRATH UNLEASHED
Large Stratmap Characters
←□↑○→△↓△

Hyper Extended Fighting
(double health and speed during Versus/Team Fighter battles, but not War Games battles)
↓↓↑↓←→↓↑↑↑↑→←□

Versus Mode Character Variations
(executed at character selection screen)
L1 L1 ↓↓ R2 SELECT R2 SELECT R1 L1 R2 R1 + SELECT

Team Fighter Mode Character Variations
(executed at character selection screen)
L1 L1 ↓↓ R2 SELECT R2 SELECT R1 L1 R1 R2 + R2 R2 SELECT

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: OPERATION SURMA
Unlock All Levels
(Warning: you can't save after using this cheat).

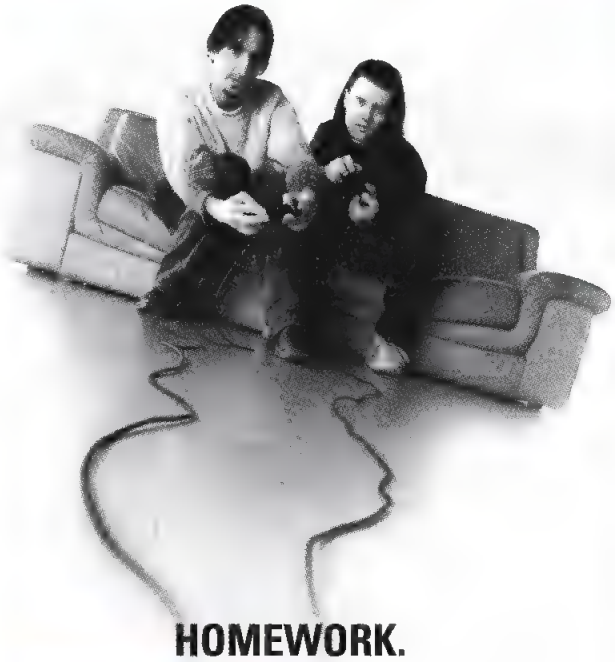
From the Main Menu, select PROFILES, highlight JASMINE CURRY (don't select it, just highlight it), then press L1+R1+△+○

You'll go back to the MAIN MENU. Select LEVELS, and you'll be able to choose from any of the game's levels.

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT!
Once you make the gnome appear, do the second code, then click on the gnome so you can select "Fill all motives"

Reveal Gnome
R2 L1 R1 R2 ←○
Fill All Motives
R2 R1 ←○↑
Unlock All Socials
L1 R1 ↓✕ L3, R3

Full Sail's Visualization Center is one of over 60 studios, production suites and computer labs located on campus.



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GameShark Codes

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II
[M] Must Be On
94D530BC 98B696F6

Player 1: Have Charon's Claw PSM Exclusive
4494B628 D460458E
39225460 9BABB1E0
4494B628 D46045AE
3942D7E1 9BABB1E0
2490962E 9470478C
2493943C 5C780D04

Player 1: Max Level
14001376 9FF812F6

Player 1: Max Experience
249351C0 56E11A4C

Player 1: Infinite Health
24D6F480 04614D34
24D6F480 04614D84

Player 1: Infinite Energy
24D4B788 44604C2C
24D4B788 44604C1C

Player 1: Max Strength
24001168 1EF053FE

Player 1: Max Dexterity
2440B628 1C70450E

Player 1: Max Constitution
2440B628 1C70452E

Player 1: Max Intelligence
2440B628 1C70451E

Player 1: Max Wisdom
2440B628 1C70453E

Player 1: Max Charisma
2440B628 1C70458E

Player 2: Max Level
14009676 9D780036

Player 2: Max Experience
2493D6C0 5461088C

Player 2: Infinite Health
2496D7C0 046149B4
2496D5C0 04614904

Player 2: Infinite Energy
249495C8 446048AC
249495C8 4460489C

Player 2: Max Strength
24009468 1C70413E

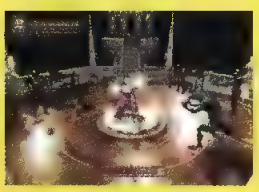
◀ It doesn't matter which character you choose: we can help buff you up.

Player 2: Max Dexterity
24009468 1C70418E

Player 2: Max Constitution
24009468 1C7041AE
Player 2: Max Intelligence
24009468 1C70419E

Player 2: Max Wisdom
24009468 1C7041BE

Player 2: Max Charisma
24009768 1C70410E



▲ Sure, you're tough enough to beat Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2 without help, but the Charon's Claw sure would speed things along.

Fallout: Brotherhood Of Steel
[M] Must Be On
94D011AC 116E1C64

Infinite Ammo
24D29CFC BDF40379

1 Hit Kills PSM Exclusive
245BA62A 1654C10A
2450B6A8 D274C129
24D2A628 5274C11A
24CAB6AC 8654C138
24D8B6A8 8774818A
24DAF60A 1675C1A8
24D2BEBC 9F748199
249195E8 327645B0

Player 1: Infinite Health
55901228 9634D5DC
392354A5 3BAB91C0

Player 1: Infinite Caps
2544113E DF3DDB2E

Player 1: Max Experience
254C533E CFBEC90E

Player 1: Infinite Skill Points
254C533E CFBEC92E

Player 1: Max Armor
250C513E CFBEDDCE

Player 2: Infinite Health
55D01228 96B4C39C
3923D4A4 AB2BB1C0

Player 2: Infinite Caps
2544113E DFBDC92E

Player 2: Max Experience

▲ Our PSM-exclusive, one-hit kills code can help keep the lovely Nadia from getting whomped by radioactive mutants.

254C533E CF3EDB0E

Player 2: Infinite Skill Points
254C533E CF3EDB2E

Player 2: Max Armor
250C513E CF3ECB8E

NFL Street
[M] Must Be On
94941BB2 1D2E594C

Home Team Max Score
24D1B0E8 30765124
24D0B6A8 1274C109
2450A628 1275C128
24C1BEAA 1664C119
24D1B620 966E8030

Away Team Max Score
24D1B0E8 30765124
2450B6A8 1274C109
2450A628 1275C128
24C1BEAA 1664C119
24D1B620 966E8030

Home Team Max Style Points
24437A86 DCE1DEEA

Away Team Max Style Points
24437A86 DCE1DECA

Home Team Infinite GameBreakers
24D03234 15F097F8

Away Team Infinite GameBreakers
24D03234 15F097D8

Home Team No GameBreakers
24D03228 14F0D7F8

Away Team No GameBreakers
24D03228 14F0D7D8

Home Team Infinite Turbo
249C4478 50F3CA51

Away Team Infinite Turbo
249C4578 5073CAD1

First Down (Hold Select And Press L2)
D4809F37 BDF8DE42
24501528 16F0D508

Fourth Down (Hold Select And Press R2)
D4809F27 BDF89E42
24D01528 96F0D508

Infinite Development Points
24449E7C FF79DB3E

Sonic Heroes
[M] Must Be On
9490B2BC 95E61BC8

All Characters Max Level
24103568 32B4C3DF

Disable Timer
24913674 BDBCD549

Infinite: Lives
24009368 3A34C76B

Infinite: Rings
24009878 9AB4936F

Infinite: Team Blast Gauge
249056E8 24B4D5EA

Infinite: Flight Gauge
249812AC B416C76D

Star Trek: Shattered Universe
[M] Must Be On
F441B62E 7B6C4516

Infinite Shield Strength
24DBBEB8 1756C100
24C1B632 976E8022
24CBB6BA 1F56C111
249111A8 32F65324

Infinite Primary Weapon
2490B268 36F457EC
2490B068 36F4574C

Unlock: All Levels
24D0B46C 34F457DA

Unlock: Kobayashi Maru Difficulty Level
2450B768 34F45748

Unlock: Ship Codes: All Ships
4410B568 30E457E8

Unlock: Ship Codes: All Ships
394AD7E1 DAA72120

Unlock: Ship Codes: Imperial "Wraith"
2410B568 34F457E8

Unlock: Ship Codes: Imperial "Spectre"
2410B568 34F457D8

Unlock: Ship Codes: Orion "Corsair"
2410B568 34F457F8

Unlock: Ship Codes: Imperial "Phantom"
24509668 34745748

Unlock: Ship Codes: Klingon "Bird Of Prey"
24509668 34745768

Unlock: Ship Codes: Romulan "Shrike"
24509668 34745758

Starfleet Record: Rank: Shuttle Pilot 4th Class
24509668 347457F8

Starfleet Record: Rank: Shuttle Pilot 3rd Class
24D09668 347457FA

Starfleet Record: Rank: Shuttle Pilot 2nd Class
24509668 347457FA

Starfleet Record: Rank: Shuttle Pilot 1st Class
24D09668 B47457F8

Starfleet Record: Rank: Ensign
24509668 B47457F8

Starfleet Record: Rank: Lieutenant Junior Grade
24D09668 B47457FA

Starfleet Record: Rank: Liuetenant
24509668 B47457FA

Starfleet Record: Rank: Liutenant Commander
24D0966A 347457F8

Starfleet Record: Rank: Commander
2450966A 347457F8

Starfleet Record: Medals Obtained: All Medals
44509668 34645778
394AD7E1 DAA72120

Starfleet Record: Medals Obtained: Starfleet Citation For Conspicuous Gallantry
24509668 34745778

Starfleet Record: Medals Obtained: Preantares Ribbon Of Commendation
24509668 347457C8

Starfleet Record: Medals Obtained: Grankite Order Of Tactics (Class Of Excellence)
24509668 347457E8

Starfleet Record: Medals Obtained: Starfleet Medal Of Honor
24509668 347457D8

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PSM Magazine is teaming up with Universal Pictures to give away a grand prize that will make you the envy of your town. In order to win, you'll have to show your love for movie monsters... by designing your own! Draw, mold, or build your own original movie monster that would leave even Van Helsing himself quaking in his boots, and you'll score yourself the screening, the music, or the game!

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If this sounds sweet to you (and we know it does), entering is simple. Send an e-mail with your full name, full mailing address, your age*, and telephone number to psm@futurenetworkusa.com with the subject line "Van Helsing Contest" and a digital photograph of your entry attached. Limit one entry per person. Multiple entries will result in automatic disqualification. Entries that do not have the correct subject line or all of the required information will be disqualified.

You can also enter via U.S. Mail by sending your entry along with your full name, full mailing address, your age* and telephone number to:

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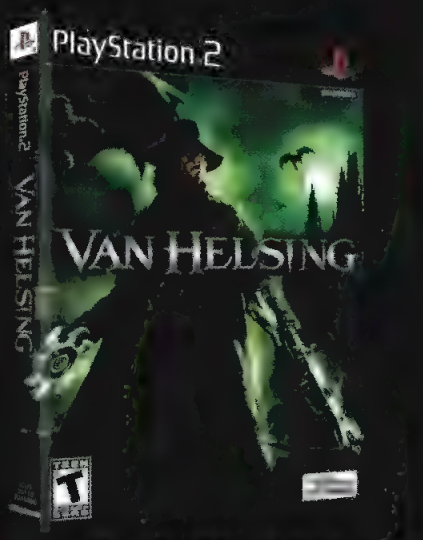
150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005

So put your thinking caps on, get to work, and send in your best idea!

*You can enter if you're under 18, but you have to have your parents' permission!



IN STORES MAY 7

No purchase is necessary to win. The winners will be determined by the vote of three judges, each of whom (a) is a Future Network USA employee assigned to our PSM magazine team, and (b) will be chosen by the President of Future USA. These three judges, whose decision is final, will base their decisions on the following criteria: Originality, approach to product design/concept, and artistic/technical production skills.

After you have prepared your illustration, make sure to make a copy of your art for your own files, as we cannot and will not return any submission. Also, all submissions sent by U.S. Mail or overnight delivery must be no larger than a regular 8.5" X 11" sheet of paper. All entries must be received no later than April 12, 2004. Winners will be chosen on or about April 13, 2004.

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PSM LETTERS

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

▲ Even some the biggest RPGs, like the *Suikoden IV*, let you choose what to say — but the ending's always the same.

RANDY'S TIP OF THE MONTH:
"How many times has this happened to you: you need to get to the next area, but you haven't collected all the items you need to progress because you can't find them. There's a simple solution to this problem that works nine times out of 10 — the item you're missing is almost always under the cushions on your couch. Go there, grab it, and you'll be able to leave the house and go to work, school, the movie — whatever the next level is."

[redacted]

Aaron Morris, vash6@hotmail.com

ERIC [redacted]

▲ Randy enters the ring, while Bill contemplates how much bandages and iodine are gonna cost.

No Joy In Mudville

I was reading your Gaming on the Go! article in Issue #79 and the Power Joy III caught my eye. I have heard some people say that it is illegal because the small company doesn't have the licenses for the games. I also heard that it can play Japanese Famicon cartridges, which also sounds illegal. I went on eBay and saw an auction for one, but when I clicked on it, it said the auction was invalid. So, it seems to me that this might be an illegal item. But I can't depend on rumors, so I need an answer from people I can trust. And those people are you.

Barnett Yeager, barrelltx@hotmail.com

ERIC **Thanks, Barrett. We'll do our best to fulfill that trust. Unfortunately, it's pretty tough to find hard facts about the Power Joy III, but the circumstantial evidence looks bad. The company's website claims to be remodeling, and our emails to Power Joy bounced — never a good sign. The licensing issue does seem suspect, and though we can't vouch for its ability to play Famicom carts, but Power Joy was planning on releasing carts full of new games, and the cart slot looks identical to Famicom's so this sounds feasible.**

Our best guess is that the company has become embroiled in some sort of situation

TalkBACK

EACH MONTH we post a new question on our website at **psmonline.com**, and print the best answers here in our Letters section. Give PSM a piece of your mind!

This Month's Question: "What classic game or series would you bring back on PS2, and how would you improve it?"

The games I would bring back are *Root Beer Tapper* and *Earthbound*. These games are fine as is!

David Escobar, Tucson, AZ

Commander Keen or the original *Duke Nukem*. I wouldn't improve them because they are pure zen classics!

Brendon Erdman, OH

I don't know. I am too modern.

Ben Plummer, Wakefield, RI

I'd bring back *Dig Dug*, but instead of the regular main character, I'd make The 800 LB. Gorilla the main character and have him go around blowing up monkeys and retrieving bananas.

Alvin Alkalib, West Bloomfield, MI

I'd definitely bring back the *Golden Axe* game. That was the king of the Sega Genesis.

James Groskey, Grand Rapids, MI

I'd bring back *Super Mario* with better graphics, a new storyboard and make it as hard, and action-packed as ever.

Joel Marmer, Morrow, OH

DOWNTIME

Hey, only 99% of our time is spent on playing games! We do other stuff, too!

▲ Bill didn't know it, but the "Drinkotron" was actually just an old urinalysis device we gave him.

▲ Stay tuned next month for sizzling in-depth previews of *Checkers*, *Tag*, and *Hide-And-Seek!*

▲ Chris later recounted through sobs: "Steve was like a brother to me. A little... green... brother!"

▲ Little did Steve know that his experiment's success would have such dire ramifications...

regarding the questionable legality of the included games or the NES-based internal hardware, and that you're not going to see the device offered any longer. If this is indeed the case, please accept our apologies — we here at PSM feel very strongly that game piracy of any kind is wrong, and we would never have recommended the Power Joy III if we knew it was being produced or sold illegally.

A Question Of Some Import

Why exactly won't Sony officially sell imported games from Japan here in the U.S. for people who have legally purchased a Japanese PlayStation 2? I would prefer if Sony would have an English translated option on their Japanese Playstation 2 products webpage. I should be able to log onto the Internet and purchase a Japanese PlayStation 2. I know what you're thinking... how could I play a Japanese PlayStation game if I can't even read Japanese? Easy: the games in particular that I want to play are in English, but are not scheduled for release in America. The games are *Xenosaga Episode I Reloaded* & *Final Fantasy X-2 International + Last Mission*. Please let me know if this may have any hope of changing someday? Do you guys at PSM plan on buying these games, and if so will we see a review in any upcoming issues?

Jarod Oates, Kmoalie@aol.com

ERIC I'm a huge import fan, so yes, I'll probably buy them. As far as reviews, we're currently considering adding in at least the occasional import review, especially for games that have little chance of being officially released over here. In fact, we'd welcome readers' thoughts on the subject: if this is something you'd like to see, drop us a line and let us know.

Faux Fatalities

I was looking at one of your old issues and I saw that, for one of your challenges, you had to find out what Blaze's and Mokap's fatalities were. Well, I was just trying to find them on-line and it's like no one knows. So, since you guys made this challenge, do you know what their fatalities are or do they not have them?

Dylan Wenz, gunblademash1307@hotmail.com

STEVE Unfortunately, early on, Midway's PR team misinformed us that there were fatalities for Blaze and Mokap. However, having tried every possible button and controller combination, we discovered that the fatalities actually didn't exist. That, of course, happened too late, as the magazine had already shipped to the printers. To all you *Mortal Kombat* fans out there, we apologize for the confusion. However, maybe we should have a contest where you readers use your Photoshop skills to create fatalities for the two hidden characters. What do you think?

ERIC Incidentally, you'll notice that we still had a winner for that contest. She won because she actually managed to track down the producer of the game and send us a printed transcript of a written exchange she had with him, in which he explained that the team simply ran out of time and was unable to insert the fatalties for those characters. Only a few folks went to this length, and no one did so as completely as our winner did.

Port-A-Potty?

Why do people complain so much when a once PS2-only game is ported over to the Xbox or Gamecube? Those consoles usually get them one year later with a new level, or some other feature. I could care less. I'd much rather have the games now. I own all three major platforms and I'd rather buy a game for the PS2 first, rather than wait for it to be ported over to another console. Who cares if the Gamecube has a *Final Fantasy* side-story, or a *MGS* remake? PS2 gamers have the much better *MGS 3*, and *FF* titles to look forward to. As for *GTA* on Xbox... please. We've all seen it and played it on the PS2. The port to the Xbox is nothing special.

If gamers want something else to cry about, *Manhunt* is no longer a PlayStation 2-only title. It's coming to the Xbox. (continued next page)

▶ We know Quan Chi's got some gnarly fatalities!

GAMES WE WANT TO SEE

BAND THEFT AUDIO

Your record producer just delivered an ultimatum: finish your next album within the next 48 hours, or he'll tear up your contract! There's only one solution: take other bands' work and steal it. Be just like some of your favorite real-life stars; hear a riff or melody you like on another band's album? Simply rip it off, or just perform note-for-note covers of old songs. Copy songs from your favorite CDs to the PS2 HDD and use them to paste together the ultimate chart-topper. Note: *Band Theft Audio: Litigation* expansion kit sold separately.

How about a better *Tomb Raider* title?

Brian Whitlinger, Stow, OH

Tetris. Imagine you have a 3rd person view behind the blocks as they hurtle down the short course dodging things in the way, and finally turning in the right direction to slam into place at the end.

Joel Smart, Abbotsford, BC

The *Chrono Trigger/Cross* series. I would make a longer game, better graphics, and add more weapons to the list.

Nick Bryant, Corvallis, OR

Without a doubt, *Super Mario Brothers 3*, with less pixellated graphics. Sony would make a killing.

David Albertson, Broadway, VA

I would bring back *Crazy Taxi*... HAHAHAHA! Sorry, I couldn't keep a straight face... HAHAHAHAHA!

David Williams, Cedar Falls, IA

I'd love to see the old chicken cross the road game for Atari, with new modes, graphics and gameplay that are better than *Frogger*.

Steve Rhodes, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

I would bring back *Legendary Wings* from Nintendo, and I would turn it into an RPG.

Clint Young, Gunnison, UT

The game that I would like to have come back is called *Bad Dudes*. The only way I'd improve it is by making the game 3D instead of 2D.

Ruben Perez, Orlando, FL

HARDCORE

He Don't Know Jak!

I just We "I don't get it!" That was my initial feeling when I first played *Jak II*, and that's how I still feel. I loved the original *Jak*, but why *Jak II* has gotten such a high level of critical acclaim is beyond me. There's no denying the power of the engine used for this title. It is amazing to see in motion... preferably if someone else is playing it. But the game IS NOT FUN! Simply navigating to get to your next mission is a chore. The city is clogged with other vehicles that are difficult to avoid. Touching another vehicle or pedestrian in front of the local law enforcement will result in being attacked until you either miraculously make it to your next mission or you die. And good luck finding your way to your next mission... the mini map is useless and the roadways are a convoluted mess, leading the gamer to constantly pause the game to check out the big map. Is that fun? Not in my book. *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* is still my favorite 3D platformer. *Jak II* sucks.

8043, hartford@netway.com

CHRIS I agree that the between-mission city running can be a chore, but it's the only big rough spot in an otherwise brilliant game. Shooting, hoverboarding, and platforming is a blast, and the story is pretty darn good, too (well, the racing is so-so, but still...). Everyone has a right to their own opinion, but in my book, *Jak II* is a classic.

Don't go drowning in your own tears now...

Paul Rodriguez, gothicvampire2001@yahoo.com

STEVE I think complaints happen because people love the consoles that they own. And if they happen to only own one console, then they want that one to be the best and have all the great games exclusively. If you're a PS2 owner, though, then there is really no need to worry at all. The console has way more exclusives than the other two consoles combined and often gets games months before the competition. That's certainly not going to change anytime soon, either, as the PS2 is the clear market leader. So, for all you people out there who get sad whenever a game also gets released on a rival console... don't be. Everyone should get a chance to play the best games that are available, regardless of what system the ended up getting. We're just fortunate that most of these games wind up on PS2.

ASK THE 800-LB. GORILLA

All these "UNDERGROUND" games have come and gone *(Tony Hawk, Need For Speed)*, but there are no solid release dates on the two most anticipated games; *Sesame Street Underground* and *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Underground*. When are these coming out? I'm assuming that the violence, harsh language, sharing, caring, alphabet fun, and imagination will earn these games an M-rating. Please pass along any info you have on these awesome titles.

Tyler Carlson, greggcarlson2001@yahoo.com

BILL Well, Tyler, it seems that you have your finger on the pulse of today's gaming market. While it's true that by merely adding the sobriquet "Underground" to some previously harmless titles, and then throwing in a bunch of hookers, gang signs, foul language, random acts of mayhem and disrespect for societal norms has earned some companies big bucks, they are ignoring the potentially lucrative kid's market.

While *Sesame Street Underground* is still in development (there seems to be a problem in getting the Cookie Monster to pronounce "#&*@" and "&%$%#" correctly), *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Underground* was just recently released. Sadly, the idea of Mr. Rogers greeting gangs of hoodlums at the door with a Benelli M-4 Combat Shotgun didn't appeal to many younger gamers, so it's apparently died an early death and has been buried. It's truly a %*&#@# shame...

Have a question that requires a thoughtful, adult answer? Send an e-mail to bdonohue@futurenetworkusa.com, with "800-LB. Gorilla" in the Subject Line.

It's Questionable

I'd like to know how you rate *EQOA* while missing the key aspect of the game, which is interacting with other players. From what I've seen, *SOE* just gave you a Level 60 character and made everything in the world Non-Aggro (Blue-Faced), so you could just waltz around and explore all you like. It sure sounds like fun, because you don't have to deal with other players. Just try earning a level 60 mastered character. I'm sure you would appreciate the game much more by the amount of time you have put into it and the filth you have had to go through. Next time, how about taking polls from the public for a rating of a MMORPG?

Areis, t_rhineland@hotmail.com

ERIC Hmmm. Well, it mentions in the very first paragraph that *EQOA* is a "bustling online community of dedicated adventurers", and later talks about how fun it is to play with a good group — that sounds like giving kudos to the interactivity of the game to me, right? I'll admit that it's a challenge to review any MMORPG, simply because there's almost too much to absorb in the few weeks we have to play the game and write the review, but give us some credit. Our reviewer earned all his own levels, with no adjustments to make the monster A.I. easier or friendlier. Also, after about 40 hours of play, we did get a bit of a guided tour as well, to see what it would be like after perhaps 150 or more hours, just to be certain we had it right. Sorry if that offends you, but there are only so many hours in a month, and we thought this was the best way to write the most accurate review. By the way, we couldn't do a player poll for a review because that would require the game to be out already, in which case the review would be about six months too late. Plus, both haters and lovers could get into the poll and create false results, which would not be fair to the game or to you, PSM's loyal readers.

If Real Life Were Like Games...

- Eating hamburgers would actually be healthy.
- Typewriter ribbons would be America's number one export.
- Your car keys would be kept behind a sliding wall panel or under a statue.
- That disgusting ability to shoot soda out of your nose? Special move.
- The NBA would place a ban on the use of double jumps and speed boots.
- Car washes wouldn't exist... and neither would gas stations.
- You could blame being late for work on "all those damn loading screens."
- "Savings account" would mean something completely different.
- Gun control? What's that?

I'd bring back *Battle Toads* and give them huge bazookas to blast through all their enemies!

Kevin Markey, Worcester, MA

I'd say *Willow* for the NES. I remember playing that game and thought it was the bomb! I'd add more dragons and undead to deal with this time around.

Steven Maron, Carter Lake, IA

Hard Driving for the Sega Genesis. It should be brought back with controls like *GTA*, except keep all the stunts and courses from the original game.

Kook A. Munga, Holland, WI

Definitely *Tecmo's Deception*. Imagine what PS2's improved graphics, and real voices could do for the innovative series.

Laird Hensler, Salt Lake City, UT

/co. I know it's not that old, but if I don't get a sequel to this game, I may as well just lie down and die.

Thomas Biagari, Whittaker, AE

Pong, because the storyline would be so engrossing...

Mike Szofek, Calumet City, IL

I would bring back *Double Dragon!* Classic ass kickin' goodness at its best!!

Alan Rimkeit, Scappoose, OR

I would bring back *Mutant League Football*. Updated graphics and gameplay would make this an instant classic in my opinion.

Brian Giffen, San Diego, CA

Freak Out!

I have a bone to pick with America and its society. I call myself a game freak, and this game freak is getting fed up with two repetitive things: uncalled for sexual content and needless violence. You can make one of the crappiest games ever, but you just slap in a female lead character who has only two pieces of string and three bottle caps to cover herself with, and you've got every pre-teen's dream, as well as their money. And as for the violence, I've played my share of "blowing things up" games, but when a game allows you to kill people for no good reason, and it makes Game of The Year, that's where I get pretty upset!

Sergio Chapa, ThablzzrdbfflaX3@aol.com

RANDY Violence and other "hot button" issues have always been part of videogames. *Space Invaders?* Shooting down aircraft. *Pac-Man?* Eating your enemies. *Frogger?* Jaywalking. All serious offenses, to be sure. Sex and violence are two things most humans get off on — call it human nature, or what have you. They've been a part of entertainment mediums for as long as there have been movies, music, and television. Videogames aren't for children, despite the social misconception; they're just as valid an entertainment medium as those I mentioned, and, as such, will feature the ol' S&V. The bottom line it this: games are rated by the ESRB and clearly labeled as to their content. If someone really didn't want to shoot things or see scantily clad characters, they don't have to. The industry is just producing games based on what a majority of consumers want, and it's not all rainbows and happy fruit trees.

Some Sort Of Sequel

I just read that Square is making a *Final Fantasy VII* sequel DVD/Movie. Is this really true? If it is, then the person who thought of this brilliant idea should be burned at the stake right now! It is so inhumane. They make a sequel to one of the most boring *FF* games in the series and stuff it with Powder Puff girl action. Then they torture us even more by making another movie. Didn't Square learn a lesson from their last movie flop?

April Dill, bloodytickles@yahoo.com

ERIC It's true. *Final Fantasy: Advent Children* is a CGI film that takes up after the events of *Final Fantasy VII*. As to whether it's a good idea, my heart screams "Noooo!" Frankly, I don't think the *FFVII* storyline needed to be revisited in game or movie form. But for some reason, Square is still determined to legitimate itself in the cinematic world, despite the failure of *The Spirits Within*. So the *FFVII* legacy gets offered up as a wager. Who knows? Maybe the movie will rock. And if it doesn't, maybe Square will finally decide to stick with what it does best.

No Sort Of Sequel

A long time ago, a great game came out called *Shadow of Destiny*. If my memory serves me right, it received a respectable score from your magazine, but I don't know anyone that enjoyed this game nearly as much as I did. I've been praying for a sequel... well, not really, but I do really, really want a second *SOD* game. Why has such a great game been forgotten, when games that are really bad get countless sequels, like *Tomb Raider?*

Ryan Sidebottom, sidebot72@hotmail.com

CHRIS The answer is simple, Ryan — somebody up there hates you. Nah, I'm just foolin'. Because we here at PSM care so much, I called my inside man at Konami for the official word on a possible sequel. Unfortunately, that word was "no." He then asked me "where do you dig up these freaks?" Nah, I'm just foolin' with you again. *Shadow of Destiny* really was a cool game.

TECH TALK

High Wire-less Act

I am going to have cable or DSL high-speed internet service installed in my home. Are the wireless routers compatible with PlayStation 2 for online gaming or will I need to have two separate modems? If I choose cable Internet service, would I need two cable jacks, one for my PC and one for my PS2?

Junior, Jr1414cloud@aol.com

STEVE In most cases, wireless routers should work perfectly fine with your PS2. However, try to purchase a major brand, such as Linksys or Netgear, in order to ensure maximum compatibility. You'll also need to purchase a wireless receiver to plug into your PS2 (ie. Linksys Wireless B Game Adaptor). Lastly, don't hesitate to check Sony's support website for any router problems that have already been reported.

Give Him The Finger!

I just picked up a copy of *NBA Street Vol. 2* and noticed that the guy on the far right of the box has SIX fingers on his left hand!

Bob, zilla8180@yahoo.com

BILL Well, Bob, you either have no life or you have way too much time on your five-fingered hands... or possibly both... Besides, Randy has six fingers on one hand and he's normal... well, almost... in a weird sort of way...

I would bring back *Galaga*, and I wouldn't improve anything... except the graphics.

Jimmy Hernandez, Los Angeles, CA

I would bring back *Total Carnage*, but I would replace the half-naked men with suit-wearing cubicle workers with explosive briefcases.

Nick Bland, Garberville, CA

Duck Hunt, from the NES... who doesn't enjoy shooting ducks? I'd throw in new weapons to kill... I mean hunt, those ducks.

Estevan Rios, Chicago, IL

I would so bring back the game *Blaster Master*. It was so great and yet nobody remembers it.

Tony Spangler, Derby, KS

Bill Donohue's Adventure. Oh, you mean non-horror games...

Matt Puccio, Stillwater, NJ

I'd bring back *Tetris* with laser cannons.

Daniel Czyzewicz, Burr Ridge, IL

Tomb Raider, except I'd make it good.

Jacob Robbins, Willow Springs, IL

Bubble Bobble and I'd improve it by lighting the little dinosaurs on fire.

Mike Feeney, Burr Ridge, IL

I would like to see *Wonder Boy* from the Sega master system. I would SO dish out my money for that, and all you fans out there know what I am talking about!

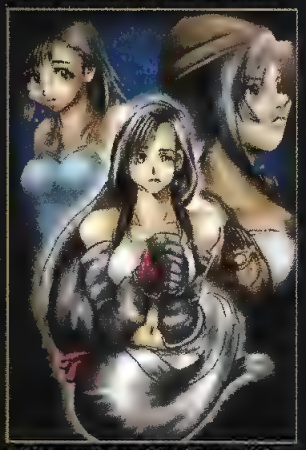
Chris Tjoa, Mississauga, ON

PSM FAN ART

Every month we take a look at the coolest PlayStation 2 fan art from the hottest new talents. If you'd like to see your illustration printed here, send us a copy! (We'll take originals too, but we can't return them.) Address it to PSM Fan Art, c/o Future Network USA, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or, even better, e-mail a hi-res version of the piece to us at psm@futurenetworkusa.com. Be sure to label the subject heading "Fan Art." Now get busy! :-)

JEN sent us this colorful Marle, one of the characters from retro RPG favorite *Chrono Trigger*. The game may be old, but this illustration is fresh.

Leonardo didn't like the reviews of *TMNT*, but ZACK FINFROCK's art rocks.



The many faces of *Final Fantasy VII*'s Tifa, as drawn by HOSHI. Great stuff!

NATE GIBSON gives us a fresh new take on *Street Fighter Alpha*'s Rose.

BIG the PIC

KINGDOM HEARTS *by* GND

Regular fan art contributor GND really put his, er, heart into this fantastically drawn and colored group shot of *Kingdom Hearts'* major players. Left to right, they're: Peter Pan, The Beast, Jack Skellington, Goofy, Aladdin, Ariel, Tarzan, Sora, and Donald Duck. For more of GND's awesome work, check out http://www.well-of-souls.com/gnd

After a long month of defeating his foes, the legendary Strider Hiryu likes to kick back in... Antarctica? Love the penguins, S. MCWILLIAMS.

I would bring back the original *Doom* and add in-game cutscenes and a massively multiplayer deathmatch mode.

Cyle Pierce, Rohnert Park, CA

Legend of Zelda, and I would take away Link's tights. What kind of hero wears tights?

Katie Hawkwing, Salem, OR

River Raid for Atari. It had the best sound effects.

Bob Spader, Anoka, MN

I would love to bring back that game where you do drive-by shootings on a horse... *Amish Drive By: Killing Thee Softly*... Oh... you say it never existed?

Glen Fester, Jerseyville, IL

I'd have to bring back the series... ah, whats it called again? Oh CRAP!! I forgot! It was a good one, though.

Jim Powers, Albany, NY

I would bring back the classic *Streets of Rage* games, and have it playable online, of course!!

Dawson Smith, Allendale, NJ

I would bring back *Metal Gear* and *Snake's Revenge*, so you can get the full story with the best graphics possible.

Frank Manzella, Chi-town, IL

Oh, that's easy. I know exactly what I would pick. Everyone will agree with me. It is _____ (insert series here).

David Johnson, Boston, MA

Buying a Video Game?

Play the game that's right for you!

You can give Tiger Woods a tennis racket, but he knows that golf is the game that's right for him. So how does Tiger know which computer and video games are OK to play? He checks the rating on every game box...And so should you!

Computer and video game ratings have two parts: **rating symbols**, which tell you what age group the game is appropriate for, and **content descriptors**, which tell you about specific content elements that may be of interest or concern.

So the next time you're choosing a game, check the rating and the content descriptors. And like Tiger Woods, play the game that's *right* for you.

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CHECK THE RATINGS ON EVERY VIDEO GAME BOX

ON FRONT

ON BACK

PSM RESET no 83

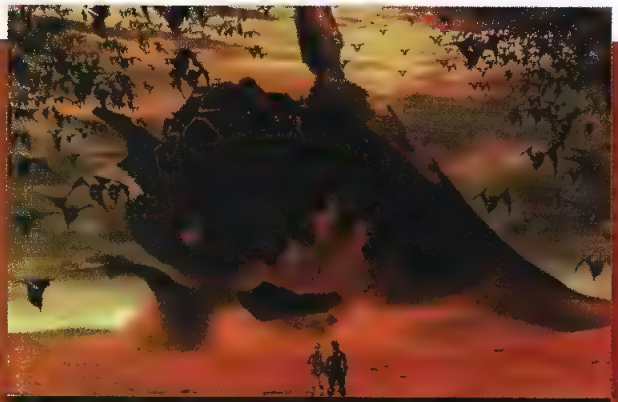
THIS ISSUE'S OVER, BUT ANOTHER ONE IS ALREADY ON THE WAY ▶ APRIL 2004

NEXT MONTH

PSM STRIKES AGAIN!

Okay, we realize you're still probably out cold from this month's astounding *Mortal Kombat* story, but if you think we're gonna let you take the full eight count, you're dead wrong! Next month, we're coming right back at you with another huge gaming revelation; a story so big, it's gonna knock you into the middle of next month! Remember, you can only read about it in PSM — the world's best-selling PlayStation 2 magazine. See ya in 30!

WRITE THIS CAPTION!



▲ WRITE A FUNNY CAPTION FOR THIS PICTURE!

Jot down a funny caption for the above screen, and if yours the best, we'll send you a PSM Prize Pack filled with cool PlayStation 2 goodies! Just send an e-mail with your entry to **psm@futurenetworkusa.com**, with the subject header "**PSM Caption #83**" (or send your entry to **PSM Caption #83, c/o Future Network USA, Brisbane, CA 94005**). Be sure to include your full name and address so we can contact you if you win!

AND THE WINNER IS...

ROBERT SCHAWINSKI of Norfolk, VA is the winner of our Holiday Caption Contest. Robert, your PSM Prize Pack is on the way!

▲ "It was the last time Randy was allowed to make popcorn in the PSM office."

3 YEARS AGO IN PSM...

April, 2001 • Issue #44

Hell Raisers!

While no one was completely enthused about the cover art for our April, 2001 issue, the contents were, as usual, entirely smokin'!

We had exclusive screens of *Soul Reaver 2* and *Blood Omen 2*. It seemed that the whole PSM staff was... well, possessed!

We also covered *Fear Effect 2*, which was, at the time, the most Adult game ever offered on the PS2. Of course, we had to declare that our Game of the Month!

Did we stop there? Hell, no! We went out on a limb and offered up our ideas for renovating the fighting game genre! It was a knock-down, drag-out fight, but we think we won that bad boy! April was a hell of a good issue, if we say so ourselves!

▲ Yeah, we know, we know... the art wasn't all that great, but the content was truly kick-ass!

PSM

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New! Weapons and Fighting Techniques
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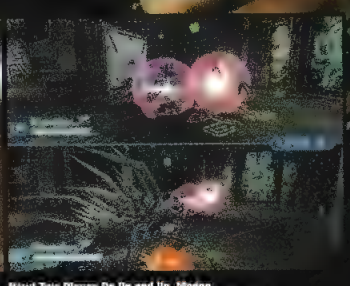

New! Two Player Co-Op and Vs. Modes
New Playable Character and 3 Two-Player Modes

TEEN T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood
Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

3DCGデザイナー募集中!!
勤務地:カナダまたは日本 応募方法など詳細は www.koei.co.jp/html/joboffer をご覧ください。

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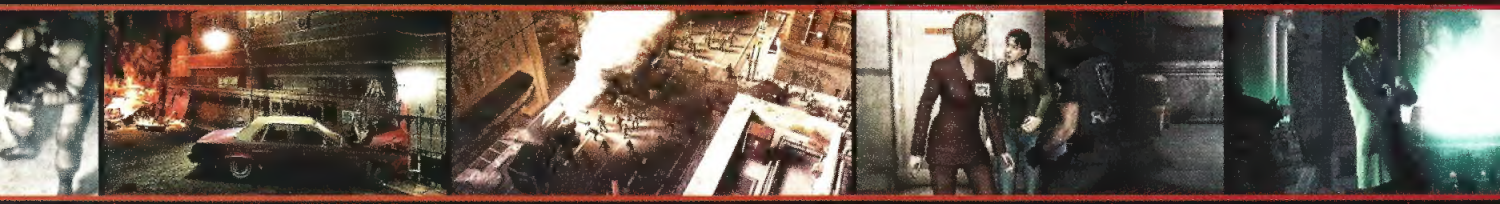

*Broadband play only with network adapter

MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

ONLINE BROADBAND ONLY

PlayStation.2

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